UNDERSTANDING

the GOSPEL of JOHN

A Commentary by MATTHEW HENRY

A commentary on the Gospel of John, complete and unabridged from Matthew Henry's six-volume COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

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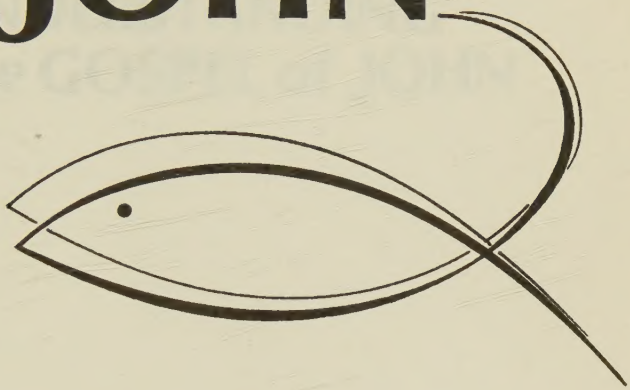

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UNDERSTANDING the GOSPEL of JOHN

AN

EXPOSITION,

WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. JOHN.

It is not material to enquire when and where this gospel was written; we are sure that it was given by inspiration of God to John, the brother of James, one of the twelve apostles, distinguished by the honourable character of *that disciple whom Jesus loved*, one of the first three of the worthies of the Son of David, whom he took to be the witnesses of his retirements, particularly of his transfiguration and his agony. The ancients tell us that John lived longest of all the twelve apostles, and was the only one of them that died a natural death, all the rest suffering martyrdom; and some of them say that he wrote this gospel at Ephesus, at the request of the ministers of the several churches of Asia, in opposition to the heresy of Corinthus and the Ebionites, who held that our Lord was a *mere man*. It seems most probable that he wrote it before his banishment into the isle of Patmos, for there he wrote his *Apocalypse*, the close of which seems designed for the closing up of the canon of scripture; and, if so, this gospel was not written after. I cannot therefore give credit to those later fathers, who say that he wrote it in his banishment, or after his return from it, many years after the destruction of Jerusalem; when he was ninety years old, saith one of them; when he was a hundred, saith another of them. However, it is clear that he wrote last of the four evangelists, and, comparing his gospel with theirs, we may observe, 1. That he *relates* what they had *omitted*; he *brings up the rear*, and his gospel is as the *rearward* or *gathering host*; it gleans up what they had passed by. Thus there was a *later* collection of Solomon's wise sayings (Prov. xxv. 1), and yet far short of what he delivered, 1 Kings iv. 32. 2. That he gives us more of the *mystery* of that of which the other evangelists gave us only the *history*. It was necessary that the matters of fact should be first settled, which was done in their *declarations of those things which Jesus began both to do and teach*, Luke i. 1; Acts i. 1. But, this being done out of the mouth of two or three witnesses, *John goes on to perfection* (Heb. vi. 1), *not laying again the foundation*, but building upon it, leading us more within the veil. Some of the ancients observe that the other evangelists wrote more of the τὰ σωματικὰ—the *bodily* things of Christ; but John writes of the τὰ πνευματικὰ—the *spiritual* things of the gospel, the life and soul of it; therefore some have called this gospel the *key of the evangelists*. Here it is that a *door* is *opened in heaven*, and the first voice we hear is, *Come up hither*, come up higher. Some of the ancients, that supposed the four living creatures in John's vision to represent the four evangelists, make John himself to be the *flying eagle*, so *high* does he *soar*, and so *clearly* does he *see* into divine and heavenly things.

CHAP. I.

The scope and design of this chapter is to confirm our faith in Christ as the eternal Son of God, and the true Messiah and Saviour of the world, that we may be brought to receive him, and rely upon him, as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and to give up ourselves to be ruled, and taught, and saved, by him. In order to this, we have here, I. An account given of him by the inspired penman himself, fairly laying down, in the beginning, what he designed his whole book should be the proof of, ver. 1—5; and again, ver. 10—14; and again, ver. 16—18. II. The testimony of John Baptist concerning him (ver. 6—9; and again, ver. 15); but most fully and particularly, ver. 19—37. III. His own manifestation of himself to Andrew and Peter (ver. 38—42), to Philip and Nathanael, ver. 43—51.

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Austin says *(de Civitate Dei*, lib. x. cap. 29) that his friend Simplicius told him he had heard a Platonic philosopher say that these first verses of St. John's gospel were *worthy to be written in letters of gold*. The learned Francis Junius, in the account he gives of his own life, tells how he was in his youth

infected with loose notions in religion, and by the grace of God was wonderfully recovered by reading accidentally these verses in a bible which his father had designedly laid in his way. He says that he observed such a divinity in the argument, such an authority and majesty in the style, that his flesh trembled, and he was struck with such amazement that for a whole day he scarcely knew where he was or what he did; and thence he dates the beginning of his being religious. Let us enquire what there is in those strong lines. The evangelist here lays down the great truth he is to prove, that Jesus Christ is God, one with the Father. Observe,

I. Of whom he speaks—*The Word*—ὁ λόγος. This is an idiom peculiar to John's writings. See 1 John i. 1; v. 7; Rev. xix. 13. Yet some think that Christ is meant by *the Word* in Acts xx. 32; Heb. iv. 12; Luke i. 2. The Chaldee paraphrase very frequently calls the Messiah *Memra—the Word of Jehovah*, and speaks of many things in the Old Testament, said to be done by *the Lord*, as done by that *Word of the Lord*. Even the vulgar Jews were taught that the *Word of God* was the same with God. The evangelist, in the close of his discourse (*v.* 18), plainly tells us why he calls Christ *the Word—because he is the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, and has declared him. Word* is two-fold: λόγος ἐνδιάθετος—*word conceived;* and λόγος προφόρικος—*word uttered.* The λόγος ὁ ἔσω and ὁ ἔξω, *ratio* and *oratio—intelligence* and *utterance.* 1. There is the *word conceived*, that is, *thought*, which is the first and only immediate product and conception of the soul (all the operations of which are performed by *thought*), and it is one with the soul. And thus the second person in the Trinity is fitly called *the Word;* for he is the *first-begotten of the Father*, that eternal essential Wisdom which *the Lord possessed*, as the soul does its thought, *in the beginning of his way*, Prov. viii. 22. There is nothing we are more sure of than *that we think*, yet nothing we are more in the dark about than *how we think;* who can declare the generation of *thought* in the soul? Surely then the generations and births of the eternal mind may well be allowed to be great mysteries of godliness, the bottom of which we cannot fathom, while yet we adore the depth. 2. There is the *word uttered*, and this is *speech*, the chief and most natural indication of the mind. And thus Christ is *the Word*, for *by him* God has in *these last days spoken to us* (Heb. i. 2), and has directed us to *hear him*, Matt. xvii. 5. He has made known God's mind to us, as a man's word or speech makes known his thoughts, as far as he pleases, and no further. Christ is called that *wonderful speaker* (see notes on Dan. viii. 13), the *speaker of things hidden* and *strange.* He is *the Word* speaking *from* God to us, and *to God* for us. John Baptist was *the voice*, but Christ *the Word:* being *the Word*, he is *the Truth*, the *Amen*, the *faithful Witness* of the mind of God.

II. What he saith of him, enough to prove beyond contradiction that *he is God.* He asserts,

1. His existence in the beginning: *In the beginning was the Word.* This bespeaks his existence, not only before his incarnation, but before all time. The beginning of time, in which all creatures were produced and brought into being, found this eternal Word in being. The world was *from* the beginning, but the Word was *in* the beginning. Eternity is usually expressed by being *before the foundation of the world.* The eternity of God is so described (Ps. xc. 2), *Before the mountains were brought forth.* So Prov. viii. 23. The Word had a being before the world had a beginning. He that *was* in the beginning *never* began, and therefore was *ever*, ἀχρονος—*without beginning of time.* So Nonnus.

2. His co-existence with the Father: *The Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Let none say that when we invite them to Christ we would draw them from God, for Christ is *with God* and *is God;* it is repeated in *v.* 2: *the same*, the very same that we believe in and preach, was *in the beginning with God*, that is, he was so from eternity. In the beginning the world was *from God*, as it was created by him; but the Word was *with God*, as ever with him. The Word was with God, (1.) In respect of *essence* and *substance;* for *the Word was God:* a distinct person or substance, for he was *with God;* and yet the same in substance, for he *was God*, Heb. i. 3. (2.) In respect of *complacency* and *felicity.* There was a glory and happiness which Christ had *with God* before the world was (*ch.* xvii. 5), the Son infinitely happy in the enjoyment of his Father's bosom, and no less the Father's delight, the Son of his love, Prov. viii. 30. (3.) In respect of *counsel* and *design.* The mystery of man's redemption by this Word incarnate was *hid in God* before all worlds, Eph. iii. 9. He that undertook to *bring us to God* (1 Pet. iii. 18) was himself from eternity *with God;* so that this grand affair of man's reconciliation to God was concerted between the Father and Son from eternity, and they understand one another perfectly well in it, Zech. vi. 13; Matt. xi. 27. He was *by him as one brought up with him* for this service, Prov. viii. 30. He was *with God*, and therefore is said to *come forth from the Father.*

3. His agency in making the world, *v.* 3. This is here, (1.) Expressly asserted: *All things were made by him.* He was *with God*, not only so as to be *acquainted* with the divine counsels from eternity, but to be *active* in the divine operations in the beginning of time. *Then was I by him*, Prov. viii. 30. God made the world *by a word* (Ps. xxxiii. 6) and Christ was *that Word.* By him, not as a subordinate instrument, but as a co-ordinate agent, God *made the world* (Heb. i. 2), not as the workman cuts by his axe, but as the

body sees by the eye. (2.) The contrary is denied: *Without him was not any thing made that was made,* from the highest angel to the meanest worm. God the Father did nothing without him in that work. Now, [1.] This proves that *he is God;* for he that *built all things is God,* Heb. iii. 4. The God of Israel often proved himself to be God with this, that he *made all things:* Isa. xl. 12, 28; xli. 4; and see Jer. x. 11, 12. [2.] This proves the excellency of the Christian religion, that the author and founder of it is the same that was the author and founder of the world. How excellent must that constitution needs be which derives its institution from him who is the fountain of all excellency! When we worship Christ, we worship him to whom the patriarchs gave honour as the Creator of the world, and on whom all creatures depend. [3.] This shows how well qualified he was for the work of our redemption and salvation. Help was laid upon one that was mighty indeed; for it was laid upon him that made all things; and he is appointed the author of our bliss who was the author of our being.

4. The original of life and light that is in him: *In him was life, v.* 4. This further proves that he is God, and every way qualified for his undertaking; for, (1.) He has *life in himself;* not only the *true God,* but the *living God.* God is life; he swears by himself when he saith, *As I live.* (2.) All living creatures have their life in him; not only all the *matter* of the creation was *made* by him, but all the *life* too that is in the creation is derived from him and supported by him. It was the Word of God that produced the *moving creatures that had life,* Gen. i. 20; Acts xvii. 25. He is that Word by which man lives more than by bread, Matt. iv. 4. (3.) Reasonable creatures have their *light* from him; that *life* which is *the light of men* comes from him. Life in man is something greater and nobler than it is in other creatures; it is *rational,* and not merely *animal.* When man became a *living soul,* his life was *light,* his capacities such as distinguished him from, and dignified him above, the beasts that perish. The *spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord,* and it was the eternal Word that lighted this candle. The light of reason, as well as the life of sense, is derived from him, and depends upon him. This proves him fit to undertake our salvation; for life and light, spiritual and eternal life and light, are the two great things that fallen man, who lies so much under the power of *death* and *darkness,* has need of. From whom may we better expect the light of divine revelation than from him who gave us the light of human reason? And if, when God gave us natural life, that life was in his Son, how readily should we receive the gospel-record, that he hath given us *eternal* life, and *that life* too *is in his Son!*

5. The manifestation of him to the children of men It might be objected, If this eternal Word was all in all thus in the creation of the world, whence is it that he has been so little taken notice of and regarded? To this he answers (*v.* 5), *The light shines, but the darkness comprehends it not.* Observe,

(1.) The discovery of the eternal Word to the lapsed world, even before he was manifested in the flesh: *The light shineth in darkness.* Light is self-evidencing, and will make itself known; this light, whence the light of men comes, hath shone, and doth shine. [1.] The eternal Word, *as God,* shines in *the darkness* of *natural conscience.* Though men by the fall are become *darkness,* yet that which may be known of God is manifested in them; see Rom. i. 19, 20. The light of nature is this light shining in darkness. Something of the power of the divine Word, both as *creating* and as *commanding,* all mankind have an innate sense of; were it not for this, earth would be a hell, a place of *utter darkness;* blessed be God, it is not so yet. [2.] The eternal Word, as Mediator, shone in the darkness of the Old-Testament types and figures, and the prophecies and promises which were of the Messiah from the beginning. He that had commanded the light of this world to shine out of darkness was himself long a light *shining in darkness;* there was a *veil* upon this *light,* 2 Cor. iii. 13.

(2.) The disability of the degenerate world to receive this discovery: *The darkness comprehended it not;* the most of men received the grace of God in these discoveries in vain. [1.] The world of mankind *comprehended not* the natural light that was in their understandings, but became *vain in their imaginations* concerning the eternal God and the eternal Word, Rom. i. 21, 28. The darkness of error and sin overpowered and quite eclipsed this light. God *spoke once, yea twice,* but *man perceived it not,* Job xxxiii. 14. [2.] The Jews, who had the light of the Old Testament, yet comprehended not Christ in it. As there was a veil upon Moses's face, so there was upon the people's hearts. In the *darkness* of the types and shadows the light shone; but such was the *darkness* of their understandings that they could not *see* it. It was therefore requisite that Christ should come, both to rectify the errors of the Gentile world and to improve the truths of the Jewish church.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. 9 *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his
own received him not. 12 But as
many as received him, to them gave
he power to become the sons of God,
even to them that believe on his name:
13 Which were born, not of blood,
nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the
will of man, but of God. 14 And
the Word was made flesh, and dwelt
among us, (and we beheld his glory,
the glory as of the only begotten of
the father,) full of grace and truth.

The evangelist designs to bring in John Baptist bearing an honourable testimony to Jesus Christ. Now in these verses, before he does this,

I. He gives us some account of the witness he is about to produce. His name was *John*, which signifies *gracious;* his conversation was austere, but he was not the less *gracious*. Now,

1. We are here told concerning him, in general, that he was a *man sent of God.* The evangelist had said concerning Jesus Christ that he was *with God* and that he *was God;* but here concerning John that he was a *man*, a mere man. God is pleased to speak to us by men like ourselves. John was a *great man*, but he was a man, a son of man; he was *sent from God*, he was God's *messenger*, so he is called, Mal. iii. 1. God gave him both his mission and his message, both his credentials and his instructions. John wrought no miracle, nor do we find that he had visions and revelations; but the strictness and purity of his life and doctrine, and the direct tendency of both to reform the world, and to revive the interests of God's kingdom among men, were plain indications that he was *sent of God.*

2. We are here told what his office and business were (*v.* 7): *The same came for a witness*, an eye-witness, a leading witness. He came εἰς μαρτυρίαν—*for a testimony.* The legal institutions had been long a testimony for God in the Jewish church. By them revealed religion was kept up; hence we read of the *tabernacle of the testimony, the ark of the testimony, the law and the testimony:* but now divine revelation is to be turned into another channel; now the testimony of Christ is the testimony of God, 1 Cor. i. 6; ii. 1. Among the Gentiles, God indeed had not left himself without witness (Acts xiv. 17), but the Redeemer had no testimonies borne him among them. There was a profound silence concerning him, till John Baptist came for a witness to him. Now observe, (1.) The matter of his testimony: *He came to bear witness to the light.* Light is a thing which witnesses for itself, and carries its own evidence along with it; but to those who shut their eyes against the light it is necessary there should be those that bear witness to it. Christ's light needs not man's testimony, but the world's darkness does. John was like the night watchman that goes round the town, proclaiming the approach of the morning light to those that have closed their eyes, and are not willing themselves to observe it; or like that watchman that was set to tell those who asked him what of the night that *the morning comes*, and, *if you will enquire, enquire ye*, Isa. xxi. 11, 12. He was sent of God to tell the world that the long-looked-for Messiah was now come, who should be *a light to enlighten the Gentiles and the glory of his people Israel;* and to proclaim that dispensation at hand which would bring life and immortality to light. (2.) The design of his testimony: *That all men through him might believe;* not in him, but in Christ, whose way he was sent to prepare. He taught men to look through him, and pass through him, to Christ; through the doctrine of repentance for sin to that of faith in Christ. He prepared men for the reception and entertainment of Christ and his gospel, by awakening them to a sight and sense of sin; and that, their eyes being thereby opened, they might be ready to admit those beams of divine light which, in the person and doctrine of the Messiah, were now ready to shine in their faces. If they would but receive this witness of man, they would soon find that the witness of God was greater, 1 John v. 9. See *ch.* x. 41. Observe, it was designed that all men through him might believe, excluding none from the kind and beneficial influences of his ministry that did not exclude themselves, as multitudes did, who rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and so received the grace of God in vain.

3. We are here cautioned not to mistake him for the light who only came to bear witness to it (*v.* 8): *He was not that light* that was expected and promised, but only was sent to bear witness of that great and ruling light. He was a star, like that which guided the wise men to Christ, a morning star; but he was not the Sun; not the Bridegroom, but a friend of the Bridegroom; not the Prince, but his harbinger. There were those who rested in John's baptism, and looked no further, as those Ephesians, Acts xix. 3. To rectify this mistake, the evangelist here, when he speaks very honourably of him, yet shows that he must give place to Christ. He was great as the prophet of the Highest, but not the Highest himself. Note, We must take heed of over-valuing ministers, as well as of under-valuing them; they are not our lords, nor have they dominion over our faith, but ministers by whom we believe, stewards of our Lord's house. We must not give up ourselves by an implicit faith to their conduct, for they are not that light; but we must attend to, and receive, their testimony; for they are sent to bear witness of that light; so then let us esteem them, and not otherwise. Had John pretended to be that light he had not been so much as a faithful witness of that light. Those who usurp the honour of Christ

forfeit the honour of being the servants of Christ; yet John was very serviceable as a witness to the light, though he was not that light. Those may be of great use to us who yet shine with a borrowed light.

II. Before he goes on with John's testimony, he returns to give us a further account of this Jesus to whom John bore record. Having shown in the beginning of the chapter the glories of his Godhead, he here comes to show the graces of his incarnation, and his favours to man as Mediator.

1. Christ was the *true Light* (*v.* 9); not as if John Baptist were a false light, but, in comparison with Christ, he was a very small light. Christ is the great light that deserves to be called so. Other lights are but figuratively and equivocally called so: Christ is the true light. The fountain of all knowledge and of all comfort must needs be the true light. He is the true light, for proof of which we are not referred to the emanations of his glory in the invisible world (the beams with which he enlightens that), but to those rays of his light which are darted downwards, and with which this dark world of ours is enlightened. But how does Christ enlighten every man that comes into the world? (1.) By his creating power he enlightens every man with the light of reason; that life which is the light of men is from him; all the discoveries and directions of reason, all the comfort it gives us, and all the beauty it puts upon us, are from Christ. (2.) By the publication of his gospel to all nations he does in effect enlighten every man. John Baptist was a light, but he enlightened only Jerusalem and Judea, and the region round about Jordan, like a candle that enlightens one room; but Christ is the true light, for he is a light to enlighten the Gentiles. His everlasting gospel is to be preached to every nation and language, Rev. xiv. 6. Like the sun which enlightens every man that will open his eyes, and receive its light (Ps. xix. 6), to which the preaching of the gospel is compared. See Rom. x. 18. Divine revelation is not now to be confined, as it had been, to one people, but to be diffused to all people, Matt. v. 15. (3.) By the operation of his Spirit and grace he enlightens all those that are enlightened to salvation; and those that are not enlightened by him perish in darkness. *The light of the knowledge of the glory of God* is said to be *in the face of Jesus Christ*, and is compared with that light which was at the beginning commanded to shine out of darkness, and which enlightens every man that comes into the world. Whatever light any man has, he is indebted to Christ for it, whether it be natural or supernatural.

2. Christ *was in the world*, *v.* 10. He was in the world, as the essential Word, before his incarnation, upholding all things; but this speaks of his being in the world when he took our nature upon him, and dwelt among us; see *ch.* xvi. 28. *I am come into the world.* The Son of the Highest was here in this *lower* world; that *light* in this *dark* world; that *holy thing* in this sinful polluted world. He left a world of bliss and glory, and was here in this melancholy miserable world. He undertook to reconcile the world to God, and therefore was *in the world*, to treat about it, and settle that affair; to satisfy God's justice for the world, and discover God's favour to the world. He was in the world, but not of it, and speaks with an air of triumph when he can say, *Now I am no more in it*, *ch.* xvii. 11. The greatest honour that ever was put upon this world, which is so mean and inconsiderable a part of the universe, was that the Son of God was once *in the world;* and, as it should engage our affections to things above that there Christ is, so it should reconcile us to our present abode in *this* world that once Christ was *here.* He *was* in the world for awhile, but it is spoken of as a thing past; and so it will be said of us shortly, We were in the world. O that when we are here no more we may be where Christ is! Now observe here, (1.) What reason Christ had to expect the most affectionate and respectful welcome possible in this world; for *the world was made by him. Therefore* he came to save a lost world because it was a world of his own making. Why should he not concern himself to revive the light that was of his own kindling, to restore a life of his own infusing, and to renew the image that was originally of his own impressing? The world was *made by him*, and therefore ought to do him homage. (2.) What cold entertainment he met with, notwithstanding: *The world knew him not.* The great Maker, Ruler, and Redeemer of the world was in it, and few or none of the inhabitants of the world were aware of it. The *ox knows his owner*, but the more brutish world did not. They did not own him, did not bid him welcome, because they did not *know him;* and they did not know him because he did not make himself known in the way that they expected—in external glory and majesty. His kingdom came not *with observation*, because it was to be a kingdom of trial and probation. When he shall come as a Judge the world shall *know* him.

3. He *came to his own* (*v.* 11); not only to the world, which was *his own*, but to the people of Israel, that were peculiarly *his own* above all people; of them he came, among them he lived, and to them he was *first sent.* The Jews were at this time a mean despicable people; *the crown was fallen from their head;* yet, in remembrance of the ancient covenant, bad as they were, and poor as they were, Christ was not ashamed to look upon them as his own. Τὰ ἴδια—his own *things;* not τοὺς ἰδίους—his own *persons*, as *true believers* are called, *ch.* xiii. 1. The Jews were *his*, as a man's house, and lands, and goods are *his*, which he uses and possesses; but believers are his as a man's wife and children

are his own, which he loves and enjoys. He came to his own, to seek and save them, because they were *his own.* He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, for it was he whose own the sheep were. Now observe,

(1.) That the generality *rejected* him: *His own received him not.* He had reason to expect that those who were his own should have bidden him welcome, considering how great the *obligations* were which they *lay under* to him, and how fair the *opportunities* were which they had of coming to the knowledge of him. They had the oracles of God, which told them beforehand *when* and *where* to expect him, and of what tribe and family he should arise. He came among them himself, introduced with signs and wonders, and himself the greatest; and therefore it is not said of them, as it was of the world (*v.* 10), that they *knew him not;* but *his own,* though they could not but know him, yet *received him not;* did not receive his doctrine, did not welcome him as the Messiah, but fortified themselves against him. The *chief priests,* that were in a particular manner *his own* (for the Levites were God's tribe), were ring-leaders in this contempt put upon him. Now this was very *unjust,* because they were *his own,* and therefore he might *command* their respect; and it was very *unkind* and *ungrateful,* because he came to them, to seek and save them, and so to *court* their respect. Note, Many who in profession are *Christ's own,* yet do not *receive him,* because they will not part with their sins, nor have him to *reign over them.*

(2.) That yet there was a remnant who *owned* him, and were faithful to him. Though his own received him not, yet there were those that *received* him (*v.* 12): *But as many as received him. Though Israel were not gathered,* yet Christ was *glorious.* Though the body of that nation persisted and perished in unbelief, yet there were many of *them* that were wrought upon to submit to Christ, and many more that *were not of that fold.* Observe here,

[1.] The true Christian's *description* and *property;* and that is, that he *receives Christ,* and *believes on his name;* the latter explains the former. Note, *First,* To be a Christian indeed is to *believe on Christ's name;* it is to *assent* to the gospel discovery, and *consent* to the gospel proposal, concerning him. His name is *the Word of God; the King of kings, the Lord our righteousness; Jesus a Saviour.* Now to *believe* on his name is to *acknowledge* that he is what these great names bespeak him to be, and to *acquiesce* in it, that he may be so *to us. Secondly,* Believing in Christ's name is *receiving* him as a gift from God. We must receive his doctrine as true and good; receive his law as just and holy; receive his offers as kind and advantageous; and we must receive the image of his grace, and impressions of his love, as the governing principle of our affections and actions.

[2.] The true Christian's dignity and privilege are twofold:—

First, The *privilege of adoption,* which takes them into the number of God's children: *To them gave he power to become the sons of God.* Hitherto, the adoption pertained to the Jews only *(Israel is my son, my first-born);* but now, by faith in Christ, Gentiles are the *children of God,* Gal. iii. 26. They have *power,* ἐξουσίαν—*authority;* for no man taketh this power to himself, but he who is *authorized* by the gospel charter. To them gave he a *right;* to them gave he this pre-eminence. *This power have all the saints.* Note, 1. It is the unspeakable privilege of all good Christians, that they are become the *children of God.* They were by nature children of wrath, children of this world. If they be the *children of God,* they *become* so, are *made* so. *Fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani—Persons are not born Christians, but made such.*—Tertullian. *Behold what manner of love is this,* 1 John iii. 1. God calls them *his children,* they call him *Father,* and are entitled to all the privileges of children, those of their way and those of their home. 2. The privilege of adoption is entirely owing to *Jesus Christ;* he *gave* this power to them that believe on his name. God is his Father, and so ours; and it is by virtue of our espousals to him, and union with him, that we stand related to God as a Father. It was in Christ that we were *predestinated to the adoption;* from him we receive both the character and the Spirit of adoption, and he is the *first-born among many brethren.* The Son of God became a Son of man, that the sons and daughters of men might become the sons and daughters of God Almighty.

Secondly, The *privilege of regeneration* (*v.* 13): *Which were born.* Note, All the children of God are born again; all that are adopted are regenerated. This *real* change evermore attends that *relative* one. Wherever God confers the dignity of children, he creates the nature and disposition of children. Men cannot do so when they adopt. Now here we have an account of the original of this new birth. 1. Negatively. (1.) It is not *propagated* by natural generation from our parents. It is *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,* nor of *corruptible seed,* 1 Pet. i. 23. Man is called *flesh and blood,* because thence he has his original: but we do not become the children of God as we become the children of our natural parents. Note, Grace does not run in the blood, as corruption does. Man polluted *begat a son in his own likeness* (Gen. v. 3); but man sanctified and renewed does not beget a son in *that* likeness. The Jews gloried much in their parentage, and the noble blood that ran in their veins: *We are Abraham's seed;* and *therefore* to them *pertained the adoption* because they were born of that blood; but this

New-Testament adoption is not founded in any such natural relation. (2.) It is not *produced* by the natural power of our own will. As it is not of *blood*, nor of *the will of the flesh*, so neither is it of the *will of man*, which labours under a moral impotency of determining itself to that which is good; so that the principles of the divine life are not of our own planting, it is the grace of God that makes us willing to be *his*. Nor can human laws or writings prevail to sanctify and regenerate a soul; if they could, the new birth would be by the will of man. But, 2. Positively: it is of *God*. This new birth is owing to the word of God as the means (1 Pet. i. 23), and to the Spirit of God as the great and sole author. True believers are *born of God*, 1 John iii. 9; v. 1. And this is necessary to their adoption; for we cannot expect the *love of God* if we have not something of his *likeness*, nor claim the privileges of adoption if we be not under the power of regeneration.

4. The *word was made flesh*, *v.* 14. This expresses Christ's incarnation more clearly than what went before. By his divine presence he always *was in the world*, and by his prophets he *came to his own*. But now that the fulness of time was come he was sent forth after another manner, *made of a woman* (Gal. iv. 4); God manifested in the flesh, according to the faith and hope of holy Job; *Yet shall I see God in my flesh*, Job xix. 26. Observe here,

(1.) The *human nature of Christ* with which he was veiled; and that expressed two ways.

[1.] *The word was made flesh. Forasmuch as the children*, who were to become the sons of God, *were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same*, Heb. ii. 14. The Socinians agree that Christ is both God and man, but they say that he *was man*, and was *made a God*, as Moses (Exod. vii. 1), directly contrary to John here, who saith, Θεὸς ἦν—*He was God*, but σὰρξ ἐγένετο—*He was made flesh.* Compare *v.* 1 with this. This intimates not only that he was really and truly man, but that he subjected himself to the miseries and calamities of the human nature. He was made *flesh*, the meanest part of man. Flesh bespeaks man *weak*, and he was crucified through *weakness*, 2 Cor. xiii. 4. *Flesh* bespeaks man *mortal* and *dying* (Ps. lxxviii. 39), and Christ was *put to death in the flesh* 1 Pet iii. 18. Nay, *flesh* bespeaks *man tainted with sin* (Gen. vi. 3), and Christ, though he was perfectly holy and harmless, yet appeared *in the likeness of sinful flesh* (Rom. viii. 3), and was made *sin for us*, 2 Cor. v. 21. When Adam had sinned, God said to him, *Dust thou art;* not only because made out of the dust, but because by sin he was sunk into dust. His fall did, σωματοῦν τὴν ψύχην, *turn him* as it were *all into body*, made him earthly; therefore he that was made a curse for us was made *flesh*, and *condemned sin in the flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. Wonder at this, that the eternal Word should be made flesh, when flesh was come into such an ill name; that he who made *all things* should himself be made flesh, one of the meanest things, and submit to that from which he was at the greatest distance. The voice that ushered in the gospel cried, *All flesh is grass* (Isa. xl. 6), to make the Redeemer's love the more wonderful, who, to *redeem* and *save* us, was made flesh, and withered as grass; but the *Word of the Lord*, who was made flesh, *endures for ever;* when made flesh, he ceased not to be the Word of God.

[2.] He *dwelt among us*, here in this lower world. Having taken upon him the nature of man, he put himself into the place and condition of other men. The Word might have been made flesh, and dwelt among the angels; but, having taken a *body* of the same mould with ours, in it he came, and resided in the same world with us. He *dwelt among us*, us worms of the earth, us that he had no need of, us that he got nothing by, us that were *corrupt* and *depraved*, and revolted from God. The Lord God came and dwelt even *among the rebellious*, Ps. lxviii. 18. He that had dwelt among angels, those noble and excellent beings, came and dwelt *among us* that are a *generation of vipers*, us *sinners*, which was worse to him than David's dwelling in Mesech and Kedar, or Ezekiel's dwelling *among scorpions*, or the church of Pergamus dwelling *where Satan's seat is.* When we look upon the upper world, the world of spirits, how mean and contemptible does this flesh, this body, appear, which we carry about with us, and this world in which our lot is cast, and how hard is it to a contemplative mind to be reconciled to them! But that the eternal Word was *made flesh*, was clothed with a body as we are, and dwelt in this world as we do, this has put an honour upon them both, and should make us willing to abide in the flesh while God has any work for us to do; for Christ dwelt in this lower world, bad as it is, till he had finished what he had to do here, *ch.* xvii. 4. He dwelt *among* the Jews, that the scripture might be fulfilled, *He shall dwell in the tents of Shem*, Gen. ix. 27. And see Zech. ii. 10. Though the Jews were unkind to him, yet he continued to dwell among them; though (as some of the ancient writers tell us) he was invited to better treatment by Abgarus king of Edessa, yet he removed not to any other nation. He *dwelt* among us. He was in the world, not as a wayfaring man that tarries but for a night, but he *dwelt* among us, made a long residence, the original word is observable, εσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν—*he dwelt among us*, he dwelt *as in a tabernacle*, which intimates, *First*, That he dwelt here in very *mean* circumstances, as shepherds that dwell in tents. He did not dwell among us *as in a palace*, but as in a *tent;* for he had not where to lay his head, and was always upon the remove. *Secondly*, That his state here was a *military*

state. Soldiers *dwell in tents;* he had long since proclaimed war with the *seed of the serpent,* and now he takes *the field* in person, sets up his standard, and pitches his tent, to prosecute this war. *Thirdly,* That his stay among us was not to be perpetual. He dwelt here as *in a tent,* not as at *home.* The patriarchs, by dwelling in tabernacles, *confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth,* and sought the better country, and so did Christ, leaving us an example, Heb. xiii. 13, 14. *Fourthly,* That as of old God dwelt in the tabernacle of Moses, by the shechinah between the cherubim, so now he dwells in the human nature of Christ; that is now the true shechinah, the symbol of God's peculiar presence. And we are to make all our addresses to God through Christ, and from him to receive divine oracles.

(2.) The *beams of his divine glory* that *darted* through this *veil of flesh: We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* The sun is still the fountain of light, though eclipsed or clouded; so Christ was still the brightness of his Father's glory, even when he *dwelt among us* in this lower world. And how slightly soever the Jews thought of him there were those that saw through the veil. Observe,

[1.] Who were the witnesses of this glory: *we,* his disciples and followers, that conversed most freely and familiarly with him; we among whom he *dwelt.* Other men discover their weaknesses to those that are most familiar with them, but it was not so with Christ; those that were most intimate with him saw most of his glory. As it was with his *doctrine,* the disciples knew the mysteries of it, while others had it *under the veil of parables;* so it was with his *person,* they saw the glory of his divinity, while others saw only the veil of his human nature. He manifested himself *to them, and not unto the world.* These witnesses were a competent number, twelve of them, a whole jury of witnesses; men of plainness and integrity, and far from any thing of design or intrigue.

[2.] What evidence they had of it: *We saw it.* They had not their evidence by report, at second hand, but were themselves eye-witnesses of those proofs on which they built their testimony that he was the *Son of the living God: We saw it.* The word signifies a fixed abiding sight, such as gave them an opportunity of making their observations. This apostle himself explains this: *What we declare unto you* of the Word of life is what we have *seen with our eyes,* and what *we have looked upon,* 1 John i. 1.

[3.] What the glory was: *The glory as of the only begotten of the Father.* The glory of the *Word made flesh* was such a glory as became the only *begotten Son of God,* and could not be the glory of any other. Note, *First,* Jesus Christ is the only begotten of the Father. Believers are the children of God by the special favour of adoption and the special grace of regeneration. They are in a sense ὁμοιούσιοι—*of a like nature* (2 Pet. i. 4), and have the image of his perfections; but Christ is ὁμούσιος—*of the same nature,* and is the express image of his person, and the Son of God by an eternal generation. Angels are sons of God, but he never said to any of them, *This day have I begotten thee,* Heb. i. 5. *Secondly,* He was evidently declared to be the only begotten of the Father, by that which was seen of his glory when he dwelt among us. Though he was in the *form of a servant,* in respect of outward circumstances, yet, in respect of graces, his form was as that of the *fourth* in the fiery furnace, *like the Son of God.* His divine glory appeared in the holiness and heavenliness of his doctrine; in his miracles, which extorted from many this acknowledgment, that he was the *Son of God;* it appeared in the purity, goodness, and beneficence, of his whole conversation. God's goodness is his glory, and he went about doing good; he spoke and acted in every thing as an incarnate Deity. Perhaps the evangelist had a particular regard to the glory of his *transfiguration,* of which he was an eye-witness; see 2 Pet. i. 16—18 God's calling him his *beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased,* intimated that he was the *only begotten of the Father;* but the full proof of this was at his resurrection.

[4.] What advantage those he dwelt among had from this. He dwelt among them, *full of grace and truth.* In the old tabernacle wherein God dwelt was the *law,* in *this* was grace; in that were *types,* in this was *truth.* The incarnate Word was every way qualified for his undertaking as Mediator; for he was *full of grace and truth,* the two great things that fallen man stands in need of; and this proved him to be the *Son of God* as much as the divine power and majesty that appeared in him. *First,* He has a fulness of grace and truth *for himself;* he had the Spirit without measure. He was full *of grace,* fully acceptable to his Father, and therefore qualified to intercede for us; and full *of truth,* fully apprized of the things he was to reveal, and therefore fit to instruct us. He had a fulness of knowledge and a fulness of compassion. *Secondly,* He has a fulness of grace and truth *for us.* He *received,* that he might *give,* and God was well pleased in him, that he might be well pleased with us in him; and this was the *truth* of the legal *types.*

15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. 16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God

at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him.*

In these verses,

I. The evangelist begins again to give us John Baptist's testimony concerning Christ, *v.* 15. He had said (*v.* 8) that he *came for a witness;* now here he tells us that he did accordingly *bear witness.* Here, Observe,

1. *How he expressed* his testimony: He *cried,* according to the prediction that he should be *the voice of one crying.* The Old-Testament prophets cried aloud, to show people their *sins;* this New-Testament prophet cried aloud, to show people their *Saviour.* This intimates, (1.) That it was an open *public* testimony, proclaimed, that all manner of persons might take notice of it, for all are concerned in it. False teachers *entice secretly,* but wisdom publishes her dictates in the chief places of concourse. (2.) That he was free and hearty in bearing this testimony. He *cried* as one that was both *well assured* of the truth to which he witnessed and *well affected* to it. He that had leaped in his *mother's womb for joy* of Christ's approach, when newly conceived, does now with a like exultation of spirit *welcome* his public appearance.

2. What his *testimony* was. He appeals to what he had said at the beginning of his ministry, when he had directed them to expect one that should *come after him,* whose forerunner he was, and never intended any other than to lead them to him, and to prepare his way. This he had given them notice of from the first. Note, It is very comfortable to a minister to have the testimony of his conscience for him that he set out in his ministry with honest principles and sincere intentions, with a single eye to the glory and honour of Christ. Now what he had then said he applies to this Jesus whom he had lately baptized, and who was so remarkably owned from heaven: *This was he of whom I spoke.* John did not tell them that there would shortly appear such a one among them, and then leave them to find him out; but in *this* he went beyond all the Old-Testament prophets that he particularly specified the person: "*This was he,* the very man I told you of, and to him all I said is to be accommodated." Now what was it he said?

(1.) He had given the preference to this Jesus: *He that comes after me,* in the time of his birth and public appearance, is preferred before me; he that *succeeds* me in preaching and making disciples is a more excellent person, upon all accounts; as the prince or peer that *comes after* is preferred before the harbinger or gentleman-usher that makes way for him. Note, Jesus Christ, who was to be called the *Son of the Highest* (Luke i. 32), was preferred before John Baptist, who was to be called only the *prophet of the Highest,* Luke i. 76. John was a minister of the New Testament, but Christ was the Mediator of the New Testament. And observe, though John was a great man, and had a great name and interest, yet he was forward to give the preference to him to whom it belonged. Note, All the ministers of Christ must prefer him and his interest before themselves and their own interests; they will make an ill account *that seek their own things, not the things of Christ,* Phil. ii. 21. He comes *after me,* and yet is *preferred before me.* Note, God dispenses his gifts according to his good pleasure, and many times crosses hands, as Jacob did, preferring the *younger* before the *elder.* Paul far outstripped those that were in Christ before him.

(2.) He here gives a good reason for it: *For he was before me,* πρωτός μου ἦν—*He was my first,* or *first to me;* he was my first Cause, my original. The *First* is one of *God's names,* Isa. xliv. 6. He is *before me,* is *my first,* [1.] In respect of *seniority:* he was *before me,* for he was before Abraham, *ch.* viii. 58. Nay, he was *before all things,* Col. i. 17. I am but of yesterday, he from eternity. It was but in *those days* that John Baptist came (Matt. iii. 1), but the goings forth of our Lord Jesus *were of old, from everlasting,* Mic. v. 2. This proves two natures in Christ. Christ, as man, *came after* John as to his public appearance; Christ, as God, was *before him;* and how could he otherwise be before him but by an eternal existence? [2.] In respect of supremacy; for he was *my prince;* so some princes are called the *first;* πρῶτον, "It is he for whose sake and service I am sent: he is my Master, I am his minister and messenger."

II. He presently returns again to speak of Jesus Christ, and cannot go on with John Baptist's testimony till *v.* 19. The 16th verse has a manifest connection with *v.* 14, where the incarnate Word was said to be *full of grace and truth.* Now here he makes this the matter, not only of our adoration, but of our thankfulness, because *from that fulness* of his *we all have received. He received gifts for men* (Ps. lxviii. 18), that he might *give gifts to men,* Eph. iv. 8. He was filled, that he might *fill all in all* (Eph. i. 23), might *fill our treasures,* Prov. viii. 21. He has a fountain of fulness overflowing: *We all have received. All we* apostles; so some. We have received the favour of this apostleship, that is *grace;* and a fitness for it, that is *truth.* Or, rather, *All we* believers; as many as received him (*v.* 16), received from him. Note, All true believers receive from Christ's fulness; the best and greatest saints cannot live without him, the meanest and weakest may live by him. This excludes proud boasting, that we have nothing but *we have received it;* and silences perplexing fears, that we want nothing but *we may receive it.* Let us see what it is that we have received.

1. We have received *grace for grace.* Our receivings by Christ are all summed up in

this one word, *grace;* we have received καὶ χάριν—*even grace*, so great a gift, so rich, so invaluable; we have received *no less* than grace; this is a gift to be spoken of with an emphasis. It is repeated, *grace for grace;* for to every stone in this building, as well as *to the top-stone*, we must cry, *Grace, grace.* Observe,

(1.) The blessing received. It is *grace;* the good will of God towards us, and the good work of God in us. God's good will works the good work, and then the good work qualifies us for further tokens of his good will. As the cistern receives water from the fulness of the fountain, the branches sap from the fulness of the root, and the air light from the fulness of the sun, so we receive grace from the fulness of Christ.

(2.) The manner of its reception: *Grace for grace*—χάριν ἀντὶ χαριτος. The phrase is singular, and interpreters put different senses upon it, each of which will be of use to illustrate the unsearchable riches of the grace of Christ. *Grace for grace* bespeaks, [1.] The *freeness* of this grace. It is grace for grace' sake; so *Grotius.* We receive grace, not for *our sakes* (be it known to us), but even so, Father, *because it seemed good in thy sight.* It is a *gift according to grace*, Rom. xii. 6. It is grace *to us* for the sake of grace to Jesus Christ. God was well pleased in him, and is therefore well pleased with us in him, Eph. i. 6. [2.] The *fulness* of this grace. *Grace for grace* is abundance of grace, grace upon grace (so *Camero*), one grace heaped upon another; as *skin for skin* is skin after skin, even all that a man has, Job ii. 4. It is a blessing poured out, that there shall not be room to receive it, *plenteous redemption:* one grace a pledge of more grace. *Joseph—He will add.* It is such a fulness as is called *the fulness of God* which we are filled with. We are not straitened in the grace of Christ, if we be not straitened in our own bosoms. [3.] The *serviceableness* of this grace. *Grace for grace* is grace for the promoting and advancing of grace. Grace to be *exercised* by ourselves; gracious habits for gracious acts. Grace to be *ministered* to others; gracious vouchsafements for gracious performances: grace is a talent to be traded with. The apostles received grace (Rom. i. 5; Eph. iii. 8), that they might communicate it, 1 Pet. iv. 10. [4.] The *substitution* of New-Testament grace *in the room and stead* of Old-Testament grace: so *Beza.* And this sense is confirmed by what follows (*v.* 17); for the Old Testament had grace in type, the New Testament has grace in truth. There was a grace under the Old Testament, the gospel was preached then (Gal. iii. 8); but that grace is superseded, and we have gospel grace instead of it, a *glory which excelleth*, 2 Cor. iii. 10. Discoveries of grace are now more clear, distributions of grace far more plentiful; this is grace instead of grace. [5.] It bespeaks the *augmentation* and *continuance of grace. Grace for grace* is one grace to improve, confirm, and perfect another grace. We are changed into the divine image, *from glory to glory*, from one degree of glorious grace to another, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Those that have *true* grace have that for *more grace*, Jam. iv. 6. When God gives grace he saith, Take this *in part;* for he who hath promised will perform. [6] It bespeaks the *agreeableness* and *conformity* of grace in the saints to the grace that is in Jesus Christ; so Mr. *Clark. Grace for grace* is grace in us answering to grace in him, as the impression upon the wax answers the seal line for line. The grace we receive from Christ *changes us into the same image* (2 Cor. iii. 18), the *image of the Son* (Rom. viii. 29), the *image of the heavenly*, 1. Cor. xv. 49.

2. We have received *grace and truth*, *v.* 17. He had said (*v.* 14) that Christ was *full of grace and truth;* now here he says that by him *grace and truth* came to us. From Christ we *receive grace;* this is a string he delights to harp upon, he cannot go off from it. Two things he further observes in this verse concerning this grace:—(1.) Its *preference* above the law of Moses: *The law was given by Moses*, and it was a glorious discovery, both of God's *will concerning* man and his *good will to* man; but the gospel of Christ is a much clearer discovery both of duty and happiness. That which was given by Moses was purely terrifying and threatening, and bound with penalties, a law which could not *give life, which was* given with abundance of terror (Heb. xii. 18); but that which is given by Jesus Christ is of another nature; it has all the beneficial uses of the law, but not the terror, for it is *grace:* grace *teaching* (Tit. ii. 11), grace *reigning*, Rom. v. 21. It is a law, but a remedial law. The endearments of love are the genius of the gospel, not the affrightments of law and the curse. (2.) Its *connection* with truth: *grace and truth.* In the gospel we have the discovery of the greatest *truths* to be embraced by the understanding, as well as of the richest *grace* to be embraced by the will and affections. It is a *faithful saying*, and *worthy of all acceptation;* that is, it is *grace and truth.* The offers of *grace* are *sincere*, and what we may venture our souls upon; they are made *in earnest*, for it is *grace and truth.* It is *grace and truth* with reference to the *law* that was *given by Moses.* For it is, [1.] The performance of all the Old-Testament promises. In the Old Testament we often find *mercy* and *truth* put together, that is, mercy according to promise; so here *grace and truth* denote grace according to promise. See Luke i. 72; 1 Kings viii. 56. [2.] It is the substance of all the Old-Testament types and shadows. Something of grace there was both in the ordinances that were instituted for Israel and the providences that occurred concerning Israel; but they were only shadows of good things to come, even of the grace that is to

be *brought to us by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* He is the *true* paschal lamb, the *true* scape-goat, the true *manna.* They had grace in the picture; we have grace in the person, that is, *grace and truth. Grace and truth came,* ἐγένετο—*was made;* the same word that was used (*v.* 3) concerning Christ's *making all things.* The law was only *made known* by Moses, but the *being* of this grace and truth, as well as the discovery of them, is owing to Jesus Christ; this was *made* by him, as the world at first was; and by him this *grace and truth* do *consist.*

3. Another thing we receive from Christ is a clear revelation of God to us (*v.* 18): He hath *declared* God to us, whom *no man hath seen at any time.* This was the grace and truth which came by Christ, the knowledge of God and an acquaintance with him. Observe,

(1.) The insufficiency of all other discoveries: *No man hath seen God at any time.* This intimates, [1.] That the nature of God being *spiritual,* he is invisible to bodily eyes, he is a being *whom no man hath seen, nor can see,* 1 Tim. vi. 16. We have therefore need to *live by faith,* by which we *see him that is invisible,* Heb. xi. 27. [2.] That the revelation which God made of himself in the Old Testament was very short and imperfect, in comparison with that which he has made by Christ: *No man hath seen God at any time;* that is, what was seen and known of God before the incarnation of Christ was nothing to that which is now seen and known; life and immortality are now brought to a much clearer light than they were then. [3.] That none of the Old-Testament prophets were so well qualified to make known the mind and will of God to the children of men as our Lord Jesus was, for none of them had *seen God at any time. Moses beheld the similitude of the Lord* (Num. xii. 8), but was told that he could not *see his face,* Exod. xxxiii. 20. But *this* recommends Christ's holy religion to us that it was founded by one that had seen God, and knew more of his mind than any one else ever did.

(2.) The all-sufficiency of the gospel discovery proved from its author: *The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.* Observe here,

[1.] How *fit* he was to make this discovery, and every way qualified for it. He and he alone was *worthy to take the book, and to open the seals,* Rev. v. 9. For, *First,* He is *the only-begotten Son;* and who so likely to know the Father as the Son? or in whom is the Father better known than in the Son? Matt. xi. 27. He is of the same nature with the Father, so that he who hath *seen him* hath seen *the Father, ch.* xiv. 9. The servant is not supposed to know so well *what his Lord does* as the Son, *ch.* xv. 15. Moses was *faithful as a servant,* but Christ *as a Son. Secondly,* He is *in the bosom of the Father.* He had lain in his bosom from eternity. When he was here upon earth, yet still, as God, he was in the bosom of the Father, and thither he returned when he *ascended. In the bosom of the Father;* that is, 1. In the bosom of his *special love,* dear to him, in *whom he was well pleased,* always his delight. All God's saints are *in his hand,* but his Son was *in his bosom,* one in nature and essence, and therefore in the highest degree one *in love.* 2. In the bosom of his *secret counsels.* As there was a mutual *complacency,* so there was a mutual *consciousness,* between the Father and Son (Matt. xi. 27); none so fit as he to make known God, for none knew his mind as he did. Our most secret counsels we are said to hide *in our bosom (in pectore);* Christ was privy to the *bosom-counsels* of the Father. The prophets *sat down at his feet* as scholars; Christ lay in his bosom as a friend. See Eph. iii. 11.

[2.] How *free* he was in making this discovery: *He hath declared. Him* is not in the original. He has declared that of God which no man had at any time seen or known; not only that which was hid *of God,* but that which was hid *in* God (Eph. iii. 9), ἐξηγήσατο—it signifies a plain, clear, and full discovery, not by general and doubtful hints, but by particular explications. He that runs may now read the will of God and the way of salvation. This is the *grace,* this the *truth,* that came by Jesus Christ.

19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? 20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. 21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. 22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? 23 He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. 24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? 26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. 28 These things were

done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

We have here the testimony of John, which he delivered to the messengers who were sent from Jerusalem to examine him. Observe here,

I. Who they were that sent to him, and who they were that were sent. 1. They that sent to him were *the Jews at Jerusalem,* the great sanhedrim or high-commission court, which sat at Jerusalem, and was the representative of the Jewish church, who took cognizance of all matters relating to religion. One would think that they who were the fountains of learning, and the guides of the church, should have, by books, understood the times so well as to know that the Messiah was at hand, and therefore should presently have known him that was his forerunner, and readily embraced him; but, instead of this, they sent messengers to *cross questions* with him. Secular learning, honour, and power, seldom dispose men's minds to the reception of divine light. 2. They that were sent were, (1.) *Priests and Levites,* probably members of the council, men of learning, gravity, and authority. John Baptist was himself a priest of the seed of Aaron, and therefore it was not fit that he should be examined by any but priests. It was prophesied concerning John's ministry that it should *purify the Sons of Levi* (Mal. iii. 3), and therefore they were jealous of him and his reformation. (2.) They were *of the Pharisees,* proud, self-justiciaries, that thought they needed no repentance, and therefore could not bear one that made it his business to preach repentance.

II. On what errand they were sent; it was to enquire concerning John and *his baptism.* They did not send for John to them, probably because they *feared the people,* lest the people where John was should be provoked to rise, or lest the people where they were should be brought acquainted with him; they thought it was good to keep him at a distance. They enquire concerning him, 1. To satisfy their curiosity; as the Athenians enquired concerning Paul's doctrine, for the novelty of it, Acts xvii. 19, 20. Such a proud conceit they had of themselves that the doctrine of repentance was to them strange doctrine. 2. It was to show their authority. They thought they *looked great* when they called him to account whom all men counted as a prophet, and arraigned him at their bar. 3. It was with a design to *suppress* him and silence him if they could find any colour for it; for they were jealous of his growing interest, and his ministry agreed neither with the Mosaic dispensation which they had been long under, nor with the notions they had formed of the Messiah's kingdom.

III. What was the answer he gave them, and his account, both concerning himself and concerning his baptism, in both which he witnessed to Christ.

1. Concerning himself, and what he professed himself to be. They asked him, Σὺ τίς εἶ—*Thou, who art thou?* John's appearing in the world was surprising. He was in the wilderness till the day of his showing unto Israel. His spirit, his converse, his doctrine, had something in them which commanded and gained respect; but he did not, as seducers do, give out himself to be *some great one.* He was more industrious to *do good* than to *appear great;* and therefore waived saying any thing of himself till he was legally interrogated. Those speak best for Christ that say least of themselves, whose *own works* praise them, not *their own lips.* He answers their interrogatory,

(1.) *Negatively.* He was not that great one whom some took him to be. God's faithful witnesses stand more upon their guard *against undue respect* than against *unjust contempt.* Paul writes as warmly against those that overvalued him, and said, *I am of Paul,* as against those that undervalued him, and said that his bodily presence was weak; and he rent his clothes when he was called a god. [1.] John disowns himself to be *the Christ* (*v.* 20): *He said, I am not the Christ,* who was now expected and waited for. Note, The ministers of Christ must remember that *they are not Christ,* and therefore must not usurp his powers and prerogatives, nor assume the praises due to him only. They are not Christ, and therefore must not lord it over God's heritage, nor pretend to a dominion over the faith of Christians. They cannot create grace and peace; they cannot enlighten, convert, quicken, comfort; for they are not Christ. Observe how emphatically this is here expressed concerning John: He *confessed, and denied not, but confessed;* it denotes his vehemence and constancy in making this protestation. Note, Temptations to pride, and assuming that honour to ourselves which does not belong to us, ought to be resisted with a great deal of vigour and earnestness. When John was taken to be the Messiah, he did not connive at it with a *Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur—If the people will be deceived, let them;* but openly and solemnly, without any ambiguities, confessed, *I am not the Christ;* ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐγὼ ὁ Χριστός—*I am not the Christ, not I;* another is at hand, who is he, but I am not. His disowning himself to be the Christ is called his *confessing* and not *denying* Christ. Note, Those that humble and abase themselves thereby confess Christ, and give honour to him; but those that will not deny themselves do in effect deny Christ. [2.] He disowns himself to be Elias, *v.* 21. The Jews expected the person of Elias to return from heaven, and to live among them, and promised themselves great things from it. Hearing of John's character, doctrine, and baptism, and observing that he appeared as one dropped from heaven, in the same part of the country from which Elijah was carried to heaven, it

is no wonder that they were ready to take him for this Elijah; but he disowned this honour too. He was indeed prophesied of under the name of Elijah (Mal. iv. 5), and he came in the *spirit and power of Elias* (Luke i. 17), and was the Elias that was to come (Matt. xi. 14); but he was not the person of Elias, not that Elias that went to heaven in the fiery chariot, as he was that met Christ in his transfiguration. He was the Elias that God had promised, not the Elias that they foolishly dreamed of. Elias did come, and *they knew him not* (Matt. xvii. 12); nor did he make himself known to them as the Elias, because they had promised themselves such an Elias as God never promised them. [3.] He disowns himself to be that *prophet*, or the prophet. *First*, He was not *that* prophet which Moses said *the Lord* would *raise up to them of their brethren*, like unto him. If they meant this, they needed not ask that question, for that prophet was no other than the Messiah, and he had said already, *I am not the Christ*. *Secondly*, He was not such a prophet as they expected and wished for, who, like Samuel and Elijah, and some other of the prophets, would interpose in public affairs, and rescue them from under the Roman yoke. *Thirdly*, He was not one of the old prophets raised from the dead, as they expected one to come before Elias, as Elias before the Messiah. *Fourthly*, Though John was a prophet, yea, more than a prophet, yet he had his revelation, not by dreams and visions, as the Old-Testament prophets had theirs; his commission and work were of another nature, and belonged to another dispensation. If John had said that he was Elias, and was a prophet, he might have made his words good; but ministers must, upon all occasions, express themselves with the utmost caution, both that they may not confirm people in any mistakes, and particularly that they may not give occasion to any to think of them *above what is meet*.

(2.) *Affirmatively*. The committee that was sent to examine him pressed for a positive answer (*v.* 22), urging the authority of *those that sent them*, which they expected he should pay a deference to: "*Tell us, What art thou?* not that we may believe thee, and be baptized by thee, but that we may *give an answer* to those that sent us, and that it may not be said we were sent on a fool's errand." John was looked upon as a man of sincerity, and therefore they believed he would not give an evasive ambiguous answer; but would be fair and above-board, and give a plain answer to a plain question: *What sayest thou of thyself?* And he did so, *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness*. Observe,

[1.] He gives his answer in the words of scripture, to show that the scripture was fulfilled in him, and that his office was supported by a divine authority. What the scripture saith of the office of the ministry should be often thought of by those of that high calling, who must look upon themselves as that, and that only, which the word of God makes them.

[2.] He gives in his answer in very humble, modest, self-denying expressions. He chooses to apply that scripture to himself which denotes not his dignity, but his duty and dependence, which bespeaks him little: *I am the voice*, as if he were *vox et præterea nihil—mere voice*.

[3.] He gives such an account of himself as might be profitable to them, and might excite and awaken them to hearken to him; for he *was the voice* (see Isa. xl. 3), a voice to alarm, an articulate voice to instruct. Ministers are but the *voice*, the vehicle, by which God is pleased to communicate his mind. What are Paul and Apollos but messengers? Observe, *First*, He was a *human* voice. The people were prepared to receive the law by the voice of thunders, and a trumpet exceedingly loud, such as made them tremble; but they were prepared for the gospel by the voice of a man like ourselves, *a still small voice*, such as that in which God came to Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 12. *Secondly*, He was the voice of *one crying*, which denotes, 1. His *earnestness* and *importunity* in calling people to repentance; he *cried aloud, and did not spare*. Ministers must preach as those that are in earnest, and are themselves affected with those things with which they desire to affect others. Those words are not likely to *thaw* the hearers' hearts that *freeze* between the speaker's lips. 2. His *open publication* of the doctrine he preached; he was the voice of one *crying*, that all manner of persons might hear and take notice. *Doth not wisdom cry?* Prov. viii. 1. *Thirdly*, It was in the *wilderness* that this voice was crying; in a place of silence and solitude, out of the noise of the world and the hurry of its business; the more retired we are from the tumult of secular affairs the better prepared we are to hear from God. *Fourthly*, That which he cried was, *Make straight the way of the Lord;* that is, 1. He came to *rectify* the mistakes of people concerning the ways of God; it is certain that they are right ways, but the scribes and Pharisees, with their corrupt glosses upon the law, had made them crooked. Now John Baptist calls people to return to the original rule. 2. He came to prepare and dispose people for the reception and entertainment of Christ and his gospel. It is an allusion to the harbingers of a prince or great man, that cry, *Make room*. Note, When God is coming towards us, we must prepare to meet him, and let the word of the Lord have *free course*. See Ps. xxiv. 7.

2. Here is his testimony concerning *his baptism*.

(1.) The enquiry which the committee made about it: *Why baptizest thou, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet?* *v.* 25. [1.] They readily apprehended baptism

to be fitly and properly used as a sacred rite or ceremony, for the Jewish church had used it with circumcision in the admission of proselytes, to signify the cleansing of them from the pollutions of their former state. That sign was made use of in the Christian church, that it might be the more passable. Christ did not affect novelty, nor should his ministers. [2.] They expected it would be used in the days of the Messiah, because it was promised that then there should be a *fountain opened* (Zech. xiii. 1), and *clean water sprinkled*, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. It is taken for granted that Christ, and Elias, and *that prophet*, would baptize, when they came to *purify* a *polluted* world. Divine justice drowned the old world *in its filth*, but divine grace has provided for the cleansing of this new world *from its filth*. [3.] They would therefore know by what authority John baptized. His denying himself to be Elias, or *that prophet*, subjected him to this further question, *Why baptizest thou?* Note, It is no new thing for a man's modesty to be turned against him, and improved to his prejudice; but it is better that men should take advantage of our low thoughts of ourselves, to *trample upon us*, than the devil take advantage of our high thoughts of ourselves, to *tempt us* to pride and draw us into his condemnation.

(2.) The account he gave of it, *v.* 26, 27.

[1.] He owned himself to be only the minister of the outward sign: "*I baptize with water*, and that is all; I am no more, and do no more, than what you see; I have no other title than *John the Baptist;* I cannot confer the spiritual grace signified by it." Paul was in care that none should think of him above what they saw him to be (2 Cor. xii. 6); so was John Baptist. Ministers must not set up for masters.

[2.] He directed them to one who was greater than himself, and would do that for them, if they pleased, which he could not do: "*I baptize with water*, and that is the utmost of my commission; I have nothing to do but by this to lead you to one that comes after me, and consign you to him." Note, The great business of Christ's ministers is to direct all people to him; we preach not ourselves, but *Christ Jesus the Lord.* John gave the same account to this committee that he had given to the people (*v.* 15): *This was he of whom I spoke.* John was constant and uniform in his testimony, not as a reed shaken with the wind. The sanhedrim were jealous of his interest in the people, but he is not afraid to tell them that there is one at the door that will go beyond him. *First*, He tells them of Christ's *presence among them* now at this time: *There stands one among you*, at this time, *whom you know not.* Christ stood among the common people, and was as one of them. Note, 1. Much true worth lies hid in this world; obscurity is often the lot of real excellency. Saints are God's *hidden ones*, therefore *the world knows them not.* 2. God himself is often nearer to us than we are aware of. *The Lord* is *in this place*, and *I knew it not.* They were gazing, in expectation of the Messiah: *Lo he is here*, or he is there, when the kingdom of God was abroad and already *among them*, Luke xvii. 21. *Secondly*, He tells them of Christ's *preference above himself:* He comes *after me*, and yet is *preferred before me.* This he had said before; he adds here, "Whose *shoe-latchet I am not worthy to loose;* I am not fit to be named the same day with him; it is an honour too great for me to pretend to be in the meanest office about him," 1 Sam. xxv. 41. Those to whom Christ is precious reckon his service, even the most despised instances of it, an honour to them. See Ps. lxxxiv. 10. If so great a man as John accounted himself unworthy of the honour of being near Christ, how unworthy then should we account ourselves! Now, one would think, these chief priests and Pharisees, upon this intimation given concerning the approach of the Messiah, should presently have asked who, and where, this excellent person was; and who more likely to tell them than he who had given them this general notice? No, they did not think this any part of their business or concern; they came to molest John, not to receive any instructions from him: so that their ignorance was *wilful;* they might have known Christ, and would not.

Lastly, Notice is taken of the place where all this was done: *In Bethabara beyond Jordan, v.* 28. Bethabara signifies the *house of passage;* some think it was the very place where Israel passed over Jordan into the land of promise under the conduct of Joshua; there was opened the way into the gospel state by Jesus Christ. It was at a great *distance* from Jerusalem, beyond Jordan; probably because what he did *there* would be least offensive to the government. Amos must go prophesy in the country, not near the court; but it was sad that Jerusalem should put so far from her the things that belonged to *her peace.* He made this confession in the same place where he was *baptizing*, that all those who attended his baptism might be witnesses of it, and none might say that they knew not what to *make of him.*

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. 30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the

Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. 35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; 36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

We have in these verses an account of John's testimony concerning Jesus Christ, which he witnessed to his own disciples that followed him. As soon as ever Christ was *baptized* he was immediately hurried into the wilderness, to be *tempted;* and there he was forty days. During his absence John had continued to bear testimony to him, and to tell the people of him; but now at last he *sees Jesus coming to him,* returning from the wilderness of temptation. As soon as that conflict was over Christ immediately returned to John, who was *preaching* and *baptizing.* Now Christ was tempted for example and encouragement to us; and this teaches us, 1. That the *hardships* of a tempted state should engage us to keep close to ordinances; to go into the *sanctuary of God,* Ps. lxxiii. 17. Our combats with Satan should oblige us to keep close to the communion of saints: two are better than one. 2. That the *honours* of a victorious state must not set us *above ordinances.* Christ had triumphed over Satan, and been attended by angels, and yet, after all, he returns to the place where John was preaching and baptizing. As long as we are on this side heaven, whatever extraordinary visits of divine grace we may have here at any time, we must still keep close to the ordinary means of grace and comfort, and walk with God in them. Now here are *two testimonies* borne by John to Christ, but those two *agree in one.*

I. Here is his testimony to Christ on the first day that he saw him coming from the wilderness; and here four things are witnessed by him concerning Christ, when he had him before his eyes:—

1. That he is *the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, v.* 29. Let us learn here,

(1.) That Jesus Christ is the *Lamb of God,* which bespeaks him the great sacrifice, by which atonement is made for sin, and man reconciled to God. Of all the legal sacrifices he chooses to allude to the *lambs* that were offered, not only because a lamb is an emblem of meekness, and Christ must be led as a *lamb to the slaughter* (Isa. liii. 7), but with a special reference, [1.] To the *daily sacrifice,* which was offered every morning and evening continually, and that was always a *lamb* (Exod. xxix. 38), which was a type of Christ, as the everlasting propitiation, whose blood continually speaks. [2.] To the *paschal lamb,* the blood of which, being sprinkled upon the door-posts, secured the Israelites from the stroke of the destroying angel. Christ is *our passover,* 1 Cor. v. 7. He is the Lamb *of God;* he is appointed by *him* (Rom. iii. 25), he was devoted to him (*ch.* xvii. 19), and he was accepted with him; in him he was well pleased. The lot which fell on the goat that was to be offered for a sin-offering was called the *Lord's lot* (Lev. xvi. 8, 9); so Christ, who was to make atonement for sin, is called the *Lamb of God.*

(2.) That Jesus Christ, as the *Lamb of God, takes away the sin of the world.* This was his undertaking; he appeared, to *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,* Heb. ix. 26. John Baptist had called people to repent of their sins, in order to the remission of them. Now here he shows how and by whom that remission was to be expected, what ground of hope we have that our sins shall be pardoned upon our repentance, though our repentance makes no satisfaction for them. This ground of hope we have—Jesus Christ is *the Lamb of God.* [1.] He *takes away sin.* He, being Mediator between God and man, takes away that which is, above any thing, offensive to the *holiness* of God, and destructive to the *happiness* of man. He came, *First,* To take away the guilt of sin by the merit of his death, to vacate the judgment, and reverse the attainder, which mankind lay under, by an act of indemnity, of which all penitent obedient believers may claim the benefit. *Secondly,* To take away the power of sin by the Spirit of his grace, so that it shall not have dominion, Rom. vi. 14. Christ, as the Lamb of God, washes us from our sins in his own blood; that is, he both *justifies* and *sanctifies* us: he *takes away sin.* He is ὁ αἴρων —*he is taking away* the sin of the world, which denotes it not a single but a continued act; it is his constant work and office to take *away sin,* which is such a *work of time* that it will never be completed till time shall be no more. He is always *taking away* sin, by the continual intercession of his blood in heaven, and the continual influence of his grace on earth. [2.] He takes away the *sin of the world;* purchases pardon for all those that repent, and believe the gospel, of what country, nation, or language, soever they be. The legal sacrifices had reference only to the sins of Israel, to make atonement for them; but the Lamb of God was offered to be a propitiation for the *sin of the whole world;* see 1 John ii. 2. This is encouraging to our faith; if Christ takes away the sin of the world, then why not my sin? Christ levelled his force at the main body of sin's army, struck at the

root, and aimed at the overthrow, of that *wickedness* which the *whole world lay in.* God was in him reconciling the world to himself. [3.] He does this by *taking it upon himself.* He is the Lamb of God, that *bears the sin of the world;* so the margin reads it. He bore sin *for us,* and so bears it *from us;* he *bore the sin of many,* as the scape-goat had the sins of Israel put upon his head, Lev. xvi. 21. God could have taken away the sin by taking away the sinner, as he took away the sin of the old world; but he has found out a way of abolishing the sin, and yet sparing the sinner, by making his Son *sin for us.*

(3.) That it is our duty, with an eye of faith, to *behold* the Lamb of God thus taking away the *sin of the world.* See him taking away sin, and let that increase our hatred of sin, and resolutions against it. Let not us hold that fast which the Lamb of God came to take away: for Christ will either take our sins away or take us away. Let it increase our love to Christ, *who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,* Rev. i. 5. Whatever God is pleased to take away from us, if withal he take away our sins, we have reason to be thankful, and no reason to complain.

2. That this was he of whom he had spoken before (*v.* 30, 31): *This is he,* this person whom I now point at, you see where he stands, *this is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man.* Observe, (1.) This honour John had above all the prophets, that, whereas they spoke of him as one that should come, he saw him already come. *This is he.* He sees him *now,* he sees him *nigh,* Num. xxiv. 17. Such a difference there is between present *faith* and future *vision.* Now we love one whom we have not seen; then we shall see him whom our souls love, shall see him, and say, This is he of whom I said, *my Christ,* and *my all, my beloved,* and *my friend.* (2.) John calls Christ *a man;* after me comes a man—ἄνηρ, a *strong man:* like *the man,* the branch, or the *man of God's right hand.* (3.) He refers to what he had himself said of him before: *This is he of whom I said.* Note, Those who have said the most honourable things of Christ will never see cause to unsay them; but the more they know him the more they are confirmed in their esteem of him. John still thinks as meanly of himself, and as highly of Christ, as ever. Though Christ appeared not in any external pomp or grandeur, yet John is not ashamed to own, *This is he whom I* meant, who is *preferred before me.* And it was necessary that John should thus show them the person, otherwise they could not have believed that one who made so mean a figure should be he of whom John had spoken such great things. (4.) He protests against any confederacy or combination with this Jesus: *And I knew him not.* Though there was some relation between them (Elisabeth was cousin to the virgin Mary), yet there was no acquaintance at all between them; John had no personal knowledge of Jesus till he saw him come to his baptism. Their manner of life had been different: John had spent his time in the wilderness, in solitude; Jesus at Nazareth, in conversation. There was no correspondence, no interview between them, that the matter might appear to be wholly carried on by the direction and disposal of Heaven, and not by any design or concert of the persons themselves. And as he hereby disowns all collusion, so also all partiality and sinister regard in it; he could not be supposed to favour him as a friend, for there was no friendship or familiarity between them. Nay, as he could not be biassed to speak honourably of him because he was a stranger to him, so, really being such a stranger to him, he was not able to say any thing of him but what he *received from above,* to which he appeals, *ch.* iii. 27. Note, They who are taught believe and confess one whom they have not seen, and blessed are they who *yet have believed.* (5.) The great intention of John's ministry and baptism was to introduce Jesus Christ. That he should be *made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.* Observe, [1.] Though John did not know Jesus by face, yet he knew that he should be made manifest. Note, We may know the certainty of that which yet we do not fully know the nature and intention of. We know that the happiness of heaven *shall be made manifest to Israel,* but cannot describe it. [2.] The general assurance John had that Christ *should be made manifest* served to carry him with diligence and resolution through his work, though he was kept in the dark concerning particulars: *Therefore am I come.* Our assurance of the reality of things, though they are unseen, is enough to quicken us to our duty. [3.] God reveals himself to his people by degrees. At first, John knew no more concerning Christ but that he should be made manifest; in confidence of that, he came baptizing, and now he is favoured with a sight of him. They who, upon God's word, believe what they do not see, shall shortly see what they now believe. [4.] The ministry of the word and sacraments is designed for no other end than to lead people to Christ, and to make him more and more manifest. [5.] Baptism with water made way for the manifesting of Christ, as it supposed our corruption and filthiness, and signified our cleansing by him who is the *fountain opened.*

3. That this was he *upon whom the Spirit descended from heaven like a dove.* For the confirming of his testimony concerning Christ, he here vouches the extraordinary appearance at his baptism, in which God himself bore witness to him. This was a considerable proof of Christ's mission. Now, to assure us of the truth of it, we are here told (*v.* 32—34),

(1.) That John Baptist saw it: He *bore record;* did not relate it as a story, but so-

lemnly attested it, with all the seriousness and solemnity of *witness-bearing*. He made affidavit of it: *I saw the Spirit descending* from heaven. John could not see the *Spirit*, but he saw the dove which was a sign and representation of the Spirit. The Spirit came now upon Christ, both to *make him fit* for his *work* and to *make him known* to the *world*. Christ was notified, not by the descent of a crown upon him, or by a transfiguration, but by the descent of the Spirit as a dove upon him, to qualify him for his undertaking. Thus the first testimony given to the apostles was by the descent of the Spirit upon them. God's children are made manifest by their *graces*; their glories are reserved for their future state. Observe, [1.] The spirit descended *from heaven*, for every good and perfect gift is *from above*. [2.] He descended *like a dove*—an emblem of meekness, and mildness, and gentleness, which makes him *fit to teach*. The dove brought the olive-branch of peace, Gen. viii. 11. [3.] The Spirit that descended upon Christ *abode upon him*, as was foretold, Isa. xi. 2. The Spirit did not *move him at times*, as Samson (Judg. xiii. 25), but *at all times*. The Spirit was given to him *without measure*; it was his prerogative to have the Spirit always upon him, so that he could at no time be found either *unqualified* for his work himself or *unfurnished* for the supply of those that seek to him for his grace.

(2.) That he was *told to expect it*, which very much corroborates the proof. It was not John's bare conjecture, that surely he on whom he saw the Spirit descending was the Son of God; but it was an *instituted* sign given him before, by which he might certainly know it (*v.* 33): *I knew him not*. He insists much upon this, that he knew no more of him than other people did, otherwise than by revelation. But *he that sent me to baptize* gave me this sign, *Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, the same is he*. [1.] See here what sure grounds John went upon in his ministry and baptism, that he might proceed with all imaginable satisfaction. *First*, He did not run *without sending*: God *sent him to baptize*. He had a warrant from heaven for what he did. When a minister's call is clear, his comfort is sure, though his success is not always so. *Secondly*, He did not run *without speeding*; for, when he was sent to *baptize with water*, he was directed to one that should *baptize with the Holy Ghost*. Under this notion John Baptist was taught to expect Christ, as one who would give that repentance and faith which he called people to, and would carry on and complete that blessed structure of which he was now laying the foundation. Note, It is a great comfort to Christ's ministers, in their administration of the outward signs, that he whose ministers they are can confer the grace signified thereby, and so put life, and soul, and power into their ministrations; can speak to the heart what they speak to the ear, and *breathe* upon the dry bones to which they *prophesy*. [2.] See what sure grounds he went upon in his designation of the person of the Messiah. God had before given him a sign, as he did to Samuel concerning Saul: "On whom thou shalt see the Spirit descend, *that same is he*." This not only prevented any mistakes, but gave him boldness in his testimony. When he had such assurance as this given him, he could speak with assurance. When John was told this before, his expectations could not but be very much raised; and, when the event exactly answered the prediction, his faith could not but be much confirmed: and these things are written that we may believe.

4. That he is *the Son of God*. This is the conclusion of John's testimony, that in which all the particulars centre, as the *quod erat demonstrandum—the fact to be demonstrated* (*v.* 34): *I saw, and bore record, that this is the Son of God*. (1.) The truth asserted is, *that this is the Son of God*. The voice from heaven proclaimed, and John subscribed to it, not only that he should baptize with the Holy Ghost by a divine authority, but that he has a divine nature. This was the peculiar Christian creed, that Jesus is the Son of God (Matt. xvi. 16), and here is the first framing of it. (2.) John's testimony to it: "*I saw, and bore record*. Not only I now bear record of it, but I did so as soon as I had seen it." Observe, [1.] What he *saw* he was forward to *bear record* of, as they, Acts iv. 20: *We cannot but speak the things which we have seen*. [2.] What he *bore record* of was what he *saw*. Christ's witnesses were eye-witnesses, and therefore the more to be credited: they did not speak by hear-say and report, 2 Pet. i. 16.

II. Here is John's testimony to Christ, the next day after, *v.* 35, 36. Where observe, 1. He took every opportunity that offered itself to lead people to Christ: *John stood looking upon Jesus as he walked*. It should seem, John was now retired from the multitude, and was in close conversation with *two* of his disciples. Note, Ministers should not only in their public preaching, but in their private converse, witness to Christ, and serve his interests. He saw Jesus *walking* at some distance, yet did not go to him himself, because he would shun every thing that might give the least colour to suspect a combination. He was *looking upon Jesus*—ἐμβλέψας; he looked stedfastly, and fixed his eyes upon him. Those that would lead others to Christ must be diligent and frequent in the *contemplation* of him themselves. John had seen Christ before, but now looked upon him, 1 John i. 1. 2. He repeated the same testimony which he had given to Christ the day before, though he could have delivered some other great truth concerning him; but thus he would show that he was uniform and constant in his testimony, and consistent with himself. His doctrine was the same in private that it was in public, as Paul's was,

Acts xx. 20, 21. It is good to have that repeated which we have heard, Phil. iii. 1. The doctrine of Christ's sacrifice for the taking away of the sin of the world ought especially to be insisted upon by all good ministers: Christ, the Lamb of God, *Christ and him crucified.* 3. He intended this especially for his two disciples that stood with him; he was willing to turn them over to Christ, for to this end he bore witness to Christ in their hearing that they might leave all to follow him, even that they might leave *him.* He did not reckon that he lost those disciples who went over from him to Christ, any more than the schoolmaster reckons that scholar lost whom he sends to the university. John gathered disciples, not for himself, but for Christ, to *prepare them for the Lord,* Luke i. 17. So far was he from being jealous of Christ's growing interest, that there was nothing he was more desirous of. Humble generous souls will give others their due praise without fear of diminishing themselves by it. What we have of reputation, as well as of other things, will not be the less for our giving every body his own.

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? 39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two which heard John *speak,* and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. 42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

We have here the turning over of two disciples from John to Jesus, and one of them fetching in a third, and these are the first-fruits of Christ's disciples; see how small the church was in its beginnings, and what the dawning of the day of its great things was.

I. Andrew and another with him were the two that John Baptist had directed to Christ, *v.* 37. Who the other was we are not told; some think that it was Thomas, comparing *ch.* xxi. 2; others that it was John himself, the penman of this gospel, whose manner it is industriously to conceal his name, *ch.* xiii. 23 and xx. 3.

1. Here is their readiness to go over to Christ: They *heard John speak* of Christ as the *Lamb of God,* and they *followed Jesus* Probably they had heard John say the same thing the day before, and then it had not the effect upon them which now it had; see the benefit of repetition, and of private personal converse. They heard him speak of Christ as the *Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world,* and this made them *follow him.* The strongest and most prevailing argument with a sensible awakened soul to follow Christ is that it is he, and he only, that *takes away sin.*

2. The kind notice Christ took of them, *v.* 38. They came behind him; but, though he had his back towards them, he was soon aware of them, and *turned,* and *saw them following.* Note, Christ takes early cognizance of the first motions of a soul towards him, and the first step taken in the way to heaven; see Isa. lxiv. 5; Luke xv. 20. He did not stay till they begged leave to speak with him, but spoke first. What communion there is between a soul and Christ, it is he that *begins the discourse.* He saith unto them, *What seek ye?* This was not a reprimand for their boldness in intruding into his company: he that came to *seek us* never checked any for *seeking* him; but, on the contrary, it is a kind invitation of them into his acquaintance whom he saw bashful and modest: "Come, what have you to say to me? What is your petition? What is your request?" Note, Those whose business it is to instruct people in the affairs of their souls should be humble, and mild, and easy of access, and should encourage those that apply to them. The question Christ put to them is what we should all put to ourselves when we begin to follow Christ, and take upon us the profession of his holy religion: "*What seek ye?* What do we design and desire?" Those that *follow* Christ, and yet *seek* the world, or themselves, or the praise of men, deceive themselves. "*What seek we* in seeking Christ? Do we seek a teacher, ruler, and reconciler? In following Christ, do we seek the favour of God and eternal life?" If our *eye* be *single* in this, we are *full of light.*

3. Their modest enquiry concerning the place of his abode: *Rabbi, where dwellest thou?* (1.) In calling him *Rabbi,* they intimated that their design in coming to him was to be *taught by him; rabbi* signifies a *master,* a teaching master; the Jews called their doctors, or learned men, *rabbies.* The word comes from *rab, multus* or *magnus,* a *rabbi,* a *great man,* and one that, as we say, has *much in him.* Never was there such a rabbi as our Lord Jesus, such a *great one,* in whom were *hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* These came to Christ to be his scholars, so must all those that apply themselves to him. John had told them that he was the *Lamb of God;* now this *Lamb* is worthy to *take the book and open the seals* as

a rabbi, Rev. v. 9. And, unless we give up ourselves to be ruled and taught by him, he will not *take away our sins.* (2.) In asking *where he dwelt,* they intimate a desire to be better acquainted with him. Christ was a stranger in this country, so that they meant where was his *inn* where he *lodged;* for there they would attend him at some seasonable time, when he should appoint, to receive instruction from him; they would not press rudely upon him, when it was not proper. Civility and good manners well become those who follow Christ. And, besides, they hoped to have more from him than they could have in a short conference now by the way. They resolved to make a business, not a by-business of conversing with Christ. Those that have had some communion with Christ cannot but desire, [1.] A *further communion* with him; they follow on to know more of him. [2.] A *fixed communion* with him; where they may sit down at his feet, and abide by his instructions. It is not enough to take a turn with Christ now and then, but we must *lodge with him.*

4. The courteous invitation Christ gave them to his lodgings: *He saith unto them, Come and see.* Thus should good desires towards Christ and communion with him be countenanced. (1.) He invites them to come to his lodgings: the nearer we approach to Christ, the more we see of his beauty and excellency. Deceivers maintain their interest in their followers by keeping them at a distance, but that which Christ desired to recommend him to the esteem and affections of his followers was that they would *come and see:* "*Come and see* what a mean lodging I have, what poor accommodations I take up with, that you may not expect any worldly advantage by following me, as they did who made their court to the scribes and Pharisees, and called them rabbin. *Come and see* what you must count upon if you follow me." See Matt. viii. 20. (2.) He invites them to come *immediately* and without delay. They asked where he lodged, that they might wait upon him at a more convenient season; but Christ invites them immediately to *come and see;* never in better time than now. Hence learn, [1.] As to others, that it is best taking people when they are in a good mind; strike while the iron is hot. [2.] As to ourselves, that it is wisdom to embrace the present opportunities: *Now is the accepted time,* 2 Cor. vi. 2.

5. Their cheerful and (no doubt) thankful acceptance of his invitation: *They came and saw where he dwelt,* and *abode with him that day.* It had been greater modesty and manners than had done them good if they had refused this offer. (1.) They readily went along with him: *They came and saw where he dwelt.* Gracious souls cheerfully accept Christ's gracious invitations; as David, Ps. xxvii. 8. They enquired not how they might be accommodated with him, but would put that to the venture, and make the best of what they found. It is good being where Christ is, wherever it be. (2.) They were so well pleased with what they found that they *abode with him that day* ("Master, it is good to be here"); and he bade them welcome. It was about the tenth hour. Some think that John reckons according to the Roman computation, and that it was about ten o'clock in the morning, and they staid with him till night; others think that John reckons as the other evangelists did, according to the Jewish computation, and that it was four o'clock in the afternoon, and they abode with him that night and the next day. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures that this next day that they spent with Christ was a sabbath-day, and, it being late, they could not get home before the sabbath. As it is our duty, wherever we are, to contrive to spend the sabbath as much as may be to our spiritual benefit and advantage, so they are blessed who, by the lively exercises of faith, love, and devotion, spend their sabbaths in communion with Christ. These are Lord's days indeed, *days of the Son of man.*

II. Andrew brought his brother Peter to Christ. If Peter had been the first-born of Christ's disciples, the papists would have made a noise with it: he did indeed afterwards come to be more eminent in gifts, but Andrew had the honour first to be acquainted with Christ, and to be the instrument of bringing Peter to him. Observe,

1. The *information* which Andrew gave to Peter, with an intimation to come to Christ.

(1.) He *found him: He first finds his own brother Simon;* his finding implies his seeking him. Simon came along with Andrew to attend John's ministry and baptism, and Andrew knew where to look for him. Perhaps the other disciple that was with him went out to seek some friend of his at the same time, but Andrew sped first: *He first findeth Simon,* who came only to attend on John, but has his expectations out-done; he meets with Jesus.

(2.) He told him whom they had found: *We have found the Messias.* Observe, [1.] he speaks *humbly;* not, "I have found," assuming the honour of the discovery to himself, but "*We* have," rejoicing that he had shared with others in it. [2.] He speaks *exultingly,* and with triumph: *We have found* that pearl of great price, that true treasure; and, having found it, he proclaims it as those lepers, 2 Kings vii. 9, for he knows that he shall have never the less in Christ for others sharing. [3.] He speaks *intelligently: We have found the Messias,* which was more than had yet been said. John had said, *He is the Lamb of God, and the Son of God,* which Andrew compares with the scriptures of the Old Testament, and, comparing them together, concludes that he is the Messiah promised to the fathers, for it is now that the fulness of time is come. Thus, by *making God's testi-*

monies his meditation, he speaks more clearly concerning Christ than ever *his teacher* had done, Ps. cxix. 99.

(3.) He *brought him to Jesus;* would not undertake to instruct him himself, but brought him to the fountain-head, persuaded him to come to Christ and introduced him. Now this was, [1.] An instance of true love to his brother, *his own* brother, so he is called here, because he was very dear to him. Note, We ought with a particular concern and application to seek the spiritual welfare of those that are related to us; for their relation to us adds both to the *obligation* and to the *opportunity* of doing good to their souls. [2.] It was an effect of his day's conversation with Christ. Note, the best evidence of our profiting by the means of grace is the piety and usefulness of our conversation afterwards. Hereby it appeared that Andrew had *been with Jesus* that he was so full of him, that he had been *in the mount,* for his face shone. He knew there was enough in Christ for all; and, having tasted that he is gracious, he could not rest till those he loved had tasted it too. Note, True grace hates monopolies, and loves not to eat its morsels alone.

2. The *entertainment* which Jesus Christ gave to Peter, who was never the less welcome for his being influenced by his brother to come, *v.* 42. Observe,

(1.) Christ called him by his name: *When Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona.* It should seem that Peter was utterly a stranger to Christ, and if so, [1.] It was a proof of Christ's omniscience that upon the first sight, without any enquiry, he could tell the name both of him and of his father. *The Lord knows them that are his,* and their whole case. However, [2.] It was an instance of his condescending grace and favour, that he did thus freely and affably call him by his name, though he was of mean extraction, and *vir nullius nominis—a man of no name.* It was an instance of God's favour to Moses that he *knew him by name,* Exod. xxxiii. 17. Some observe the signification of these names: *Simon—obedient, Jona—a dove.* An obedient dove-like spirit qualifies us to be the disciples of Christ.

(2.) He gave him a new name: *Cephas.* [1.] His giving him a name intimates *Christ's favour* to him. A new name denotes some great dignity, Rev. ii. 17; Isa. lxii. 2. By this Christ not only wiped off the reproach of his mean and obscure parentage, but adopted him into his family as one of his own. [2.] The name which he gave him bespeaks his *fidelity* to Christ: *Thou shalt be called Cephas* (that is Hebrew for *a stone*), *which is by interpretation Peter;* so it should be rendered, as Acts ix. 36. *Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas;* the former Hebrew, the latter Greek, for a *young roe.* Peter's natural temper was stiff, and hardy, and resolute, which I take to be the principal reason why Christ called him *Cephas—a stone.* When Christ afterwards prayed for him, that his faith might not fail, that so he might be firm to Christ himself, and at the same time bade him *strengthen his brethren,* and lay out himself for the support of others, then he *made him* what he here called him, *Cephas—a stone.* Those that come to Christ must come with a fixed resolution to be firm and constant to him, *like a stone,* solid and stedfast; and it is by his grace that they are so. His saying, *Be thou steady,* makes them so. Now this does no more prove that Peter was the singular or only rock upon which the church is built than the calling of James and John *Boanerges* proves them the only *sons of thunder,* or the calling of Joses *Barnabas* proves him the only *son of consolation.*

43 The day following Jesus would
go forth into Galilee, and findeth
Philip, and saith unto him, Follow
me. 44 Now Philip was of Beth-
saida, the city of Andrew and Peter.
45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith
unto him, We have found him, or
whom Moses in the law, and the pro-
phets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth,
the son of Joseph. 46 And Natha-
nael said unto him, Can there any
good thing come out of Nazareth?
Philip saith unto him, Come and see.
47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to
him, and saith of him, Behold an
Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!
48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence
knowest thou me? Jesus answered
and said unto him, Before that Philip
called thee, when thou wast under the
fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael
answered and saith unto him, Rabbi,
thou art the Son of God; thou art
the King of Israel. 50 Jesus an-
swered and said unto him, Because I
said unto thee, I saw thee under the
fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt
see greater things than these. 51
And he saith unto him, Verily, verily
I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see
heaven open, and the angels of God
ascending and descending upon the
Son of man.

We have here the call of Philip and Nathanael.

I. Philip was called immediately by Christ himself, not as Andrew, who was directed to Christ by John, or Peter, who was invited by his brother. God has various methods of bringing his chosen ones home to himself. But, whatever means he *uses,* he is not *tied* to

any. 1. Philip was called in a *preventing* way: *Jesus findeth Philip.* Christ sought us, and found us, before we made any enquiries after him. The name *Philip* is of Greek origin, and much used among the Gentiles, which some make an instance of the degeneracy of the Jewish church at this time, and their conformity to the nations; yet Christ changed not his name. 2. He was called the *day following.* See how closely Christ applied himself to his business. When work is to be done for God, we must not *lose a day.* Yet observe, Christ now called one or two a day; but, after the Spirit was poured out, there were thousands a day effectually called, in which was fulfilled *ch.* xiv. 12. 3. Jesus *would go forth into Galilee* to call him. Christ will find out all those that are given to him, wherever they are, and none of them shall be lost. 4. Philip was brought to be a disciple by the power of Christ going along with that word, *Follow me.* See the nature of true Christianity; it is *following Christ,* devoting ourselves to his *converse* and *conduct,* attending his movements, and treading in his steps. See the efficacy of the grace of Christ making the call of his word to prevail; it is the *rod of his strength.* 5. We are told that Philip was of Bethsaida, and Andrew and Peter were so too, *v.* 44. These eminent disciples received not honour from the place of their nativity, but reflected honour upon it. *Bethsaida* signifies the *house of nets,* because inhabited mostly by fishermen; thence Christ chose disciples, who were to be furnished with extraordinary gifts, and therefore needed not the ordinary advantages of learning. Bethsaida was a wicked place (Matt. xi. 21), yet even *there* was a remnant, according to the election of grace.

II. Nathanael was invited to Christ by Philip, and much is said concerning him. In which we may observe,

1. What passed between Philip and Nathanael, in which appears an observable mixture of pious zeal with weakness, such as is usually found in beginners, that are yet but *asking the way to Zion.* Here is,

(1.) The joyful news that Philip brought to Nathanael, *v.* 45. As Andrew before, so Philip here, having got some knowledge of Christ himself, rests not till he has *made manifest the savour of that knowledge.* Philip, though newly come to an acquaintance with Christ himself, yet steps aside to seek Nathanael. Note, When we have the fairest opportunities of getting good to our own souls, yet even then we must seek opportunities of doing good to the souls of others, remembering the words of Christ, *It is more blessed to give than to receive,* Acts xx. 35. O, saith Philip, *we have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write,* Observe here, [1.] What a transport of joy Philip was in, upon this new acquaintance with Christ: "We have found him whom we have so often talked of, so long wished and waited for; at last, *he is come, he is come,* and *we* have found him!" [2.] What an advantage it was to him that he was so well acquainted with the scriptures of the Old Testament, which prepared his mind for the reception of evangelical light, and made the entrance of it much the more easy: *Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write.* What was written entirely and from eternity in the *book of the divine counsels* was in part, at sundry times and in divers manners, copied out into the book of the *divine revelations.* Glorious things were written there concerning the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, Shiloh, the prophet like Moses, the Son of David, Emmanuel, the Man, the Branch, Messiah the Prince. Philip had studied these things, and was full of them, which made him readily welcome Christ. [3.] What mistakes and weaknesses he laboured under: he called Christ *Jesus of Nazareth,* whereas he was of *Bethlehem;* and the *Son of Joseph,* whereas he was but his *supposed* Son. Young beginners in religion are subject to mistakes, which time and the grace of God will rectify. It was his weakness to say, *We have found him,* for Christ found them before they found Christ. He did not yet *apprehend,* as Paul did, how he was *apprehended of Christ Jesus,* Phil. iii. 12.

(2.) The objection which Nathanael made against this, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* *v.* 46. Here, [1.] His *caution* was commendable, that he did not lightly assent to every thing that was said, but took it into examination; our rule is, *Prove all things.* But, [2.] His objection arose from ignorance. If he meant that no good thing could come out of Nazareth it was owing to his ignorance of the divine grace, as if that were less affected to one place than another, or tied itself to men's foolish and ill-natured observations. If he meant that the Messiah, that great good thing, could not come out of Nazareth, so far he was right (Moses, in the law, said that he should come out of Judah, and the prophets had assigned Bethlehem for the place of his nativity); but then he was ignorant of the matter of *fact,* that this Jesus was born at Bethlehem; so that the blunder Philip made, in calling him *Jesus of Nazareth,* occasioned this objection. Note, The mistakes of preachers often give rise to the prejudices of hearers.

(3.) The short reply which Philip gave to this objection: *Come and see.* [1.] It was his *weakness* that he could not give a satisfactory answer to it; yet it is the common case of young beginners in religion. We may *know* enough to *satisfy* ourselves, and yet not be able to *say* enough to *silence* the cavils of a subtle adversary. [2.] It was his *wisdom* and zeal that, when he could not answer the objection himself, he would have him go to one that could: *Come and see.* Let us not stand arguing here, and raising difficulties to ourselves which we cannot get

over; let us go and converse with Christ himself, and these difficulties will all vanish presently. Note, It is folly to spend that time in doubtful disputation which might be better spent, and to much better purpose, in the exercises of piety and devotion. *Come and see;* not, *Go and see*, but, "*Come*, and I will go along with thee;" as Isa. ii. 3; Jer. .. 5. From this parley between Philip and Nathanael, we may observe, *First*, That many people are kept from the ways of religion by the unreasonable prejudices they have conceived against religion, upon the account of some foreign circumstances which do not at all touch the merits of the case. *Secondly*, The best way to remove the prejudices they have entertained against religion is to prove themselves, and make trial of it. Let us not answer this matter before we hear it.

2. What passed between Nathanael and our Lord Jesus. He came and *saw*, not in vain.

(1.) Our Lord Jesus bore a very honourable testimony to Nathanael's integrity: *Jesus saw him* coming, and met him with favourable encouragement; he said of him to those about him, Nathanael himself being within hearing, *Behold an Israelite indeed.* Observe,

[1.] That he *commended* him; not to flatter him, or puff him up with a good conceit of himself, but perhaps because he knew him to be a *modest* man, if not a *melancholy* man, one that had hard and mean thoughts of himself, was ready to doubt his own sincerity; and Christ by this testimony put the matter out of doubt. Nathanael had, more than any of the candidates, objected against Christ; but Christ hereby showed that he excused it, and was not extreme to mark what he had said amiss, because he knew his heart was upright. He did not retort upon him, *Can any good thing come out of Cana* (*ch.* xxi. 2), an obscure town in Galilee? But kindly gives him this character, to encourage us to hope for acceptance with Christ, notwithstanding our weakness, and to teach us to speak honourably of those who without cause have spoken slightly of us, and to give them their due praise.

[2.] That he commended him for his *integrity. First, Behold an Israelite indeed.* It is Christ's prerogative to know what men are *indeed;* we can but *hope the best.* The whole nation were Israelites in name, but *all are not Israel that are of Israel* (Rom. ix. 6); here, however, was *an Israelite indeed.* 1. A sincere follower of the good example of Israel, whose character it was that he was a *plain man*, in opposition to Esau's character of a *cunning man.* He was a genuine son of *honest Jacob*, not only of his *seed*, but of his *spirit.* 2. A sincere professor of the faith of Israel; he was true to the religion he professed, and lived up to it: he was really as good as he seemed, and his practice was *of a piece* with his profession. He is the Jew that is one *inwardly* (Rom. ii. 29), so is he *the Christian. Secondly*, He is one in whom is *no guile*—that is the character of an Israelite indeed, a Christian indeed: *no guile* towards men; a man without trick or design; a man that one may trust; *no guile* towards God, that is, sincere in his repentance for sin; sincere in his covenanting with God; in whose spirit is *no guile*, Ps. xxxii. 2. He does not say without *guilt*, but without *guile.* Though in many things he is foolish and forgetful, yet in nothing false, nor *wickedly departing from God:* there is no allowed approved guilt in him; not painted, though he have his spots: "*Behold* this Israelite *indeed.*" 1. "Take notice of him, that you may learn his way, and do like him." 2. "Admire him; *behold*, and *wonder.*" The hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees had so leavened the Jewish church and nation, and their religion was so degenerated into formality or state-policy, that an Israelite indeed was a *man wondered at*, a miracle of divine grace, like Job, *ch.* i. 8.

(2.) Nathanael is much surprised at this, upon which Christ gives him a further proof of his omnisciency, and a kind memorial of his former devotion.

[1.] Here is Nathanael's modesty, in that he was soon put out of countenance at the kind notice Christ was pleased to take of him: "*Whence knowest thou me*, me that am unworthy of thy cognizance? *who am I, O Lord God?*" 2 Sam. vii. 18. This was an evidence of his sincerity, that he did not catch at the praise he met with, but declined it. Christ knows us better than we know ourselves; we know not what is in a man's heart by looking in his face, but all things are naked and open before Christ, Heb. iv. 12, 13. Doth Christ know us? Let us covet to know him.

[2.] Here is Christ's further *manifestation* of himself to him: *Before Philip called thee, I saw thee. First*, He gives him to understand that he *knew him*, and so manifests his divinity. It is God's prerogative infallibly to know all persons and all things; by this Christ proved himself to be God upon many occasions. It was prophesied concerning the Messiah that he should be of *quick understanding in the fear of the Lord*, that is, in judging the sincerity and degree of the fear of God in others, and that he should not *judge after the sight of his eyes*, Isa. xi. 2, 3. Here he answers that prediction. See 2 Tim. ii. 19. *Secondly*, That before Philip called him he saw him under the fig-tree; this manifests a particular kindness for him. 1. His eye was towards him before Philip called him, which was the first time that ever Nathanael was acquainted with Christ. Christ has knowledge of us before we have any knowledge of him; see Isa. xlv. 4; Gal. iv. 9. 2. His eye was upon him when he was *under the fig-tree;* this was a private token which nobody understood but Nathanael: "When thou wast retired *under the fig-tree* in thy garden, and thoughtest that no eye saw thee,

I had then my eye upon thee, and saw that which was very acceptable." It is most probable that Nathanael under the fig-tree was employed, as Isaac in the field, in meditation, and prayer, and communion with God. Perhaps then and there it was that he solemnly joined himself to the Lord in an inviolable covenant. Christ saw in secret, and by this public notice of it did in part reward him openly. *Sitting under the* fig-tree denotes quietness and composedness of spirit, which much befriend communion with God. See Mic. iv. 4; Zech. iii. 10. Nathanael herein was an Israelite indeed, that, like Israel, he *wrestled with God alone* (Gen. xxxii. 24), prayed not like the hypocrites, in the corners of the streets, but under the fig-tree.

(3.) Nathanael hereby obtained a full assurance of faith in Jesus Christ, expressed in that noble acknowledgment (*v.* 49): *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel;* that is, in short, thou art the true Messiah. Observe here, [1.] How *firmly* he believed *with the heart.* Though he had lately laboured under some prejudices concerning Christ, they had now all vanished. Note, The grace of God, in working faith, casts down imaginations. Now he asks no more, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* For he believes Jesus of Nazareth to be the chief good, and embraces him accordingly. [2.] How *freely* he confessed *with the mouth.* His confession is made in form of an adoration, directed to our Lord Jesus himself, which is a proper way of confessing our faith. *First,* He confesses Christ's prophetical office, in calling him *Rabbi,* a title which the Jews commonly gave to their teachers. Christ is the great rabbi, at whose feet we must all be *brought up. Secondly,* He confesses his divine nature and mission, in calling him the Son of God (that Son of God spoken of Ps. ii. 7); though he had but a human *form* and *aspect,* yet having a divine knowledge, the knowledge of the heart, and of things distant and secret, Nathanael thence concludes him to be the *Son of God. Thirdly,* He confesses, "*Thou art the king of Israel;* that king of Israel whom we have been long waiting for." If he be the Son of God, he is king of the Israel of God. Nathanael hereby proves himself an Israelite indeed that he so readily owns and submits to the king of Israel.

(4.) Christ hereupon raises the hopes and expectations of Nathanael to something further and greater than all this, *v.* 50, 51. Christ is very tender of young converts, and will encourage good beginnings, though weak, Matt. xii. 20.

[1.] He here signifies his acceptance, and (it should seem) his admiration, of the ready faith of Nathanael: *Because I said, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou?* He wonders that such a small indication of Christ's divine knowledge should have such an effect; it was a sign that Nathanael's heart was prepared beforehand, else the work had not been done so suddenly. Note, It is much for the honour of Christ and his grace, when the heart is surrendered to him at the first summons.

[2.] He promises him much greater helps for the confirmation and increase of his faith than he had had for the first production of it.

First, In general: "*Thou shalt see greater things than these,* stronger proofs of my being the Messiah;" the miracles of Christ, and his resurrection. Note, 1. To him that hath, and maketh good use of what he hath, more shall be given. 2. Those who truly believe the gospel will find its evidences grow upon them, and will see more and more cause to believe it. 3. Whatever discoveries Christ is pleased to make of himself to his people while they are here in this world, he hath still greater things than these to make known to them; a glory yet further *to be revealed.*

Secondly, In particular: "Not thou only, but you, all you my disciples, whose faith this is intended for the confirmation of, you *shall see heaven opened;*" this is more than telling Nathanael of his being under the fig-tree. This is introduced with a solemn preface, *Verily, verily I say unto you,* which commands both a *fixed attention* to what is said as very weighty, and a *full assent* to it as undoubtedly true: "I say it, whose word you may rely upon, *amen, amen.*" None used this word at the beginning of a sentence but Christ, though the Jews often used it at the close of a prayer, and sometimes doubled it. It is a solemn asseveration. Christ is called the *Amen* (Rev. iii. 14), and so some take it here, *I the Amen, the Amen, say unto you.* I the faithful witness. Note, The assurances we have of the glory to be revealed are built upon the word of Christ. Now see what it is that Christ assures them of: *Hereafter,* or *within awhile,* or *ere long,* or henceforth, ye shall see heaven opened.

a. It is a mean title that Christ here takes to himself: *the Son of man;* a title frequently applied to him in the gospel, but always by himself. Nathanael had called him the *Son of God* and *king of Israel*: he calls himself *Son of man,* (*a.*) To express his *humility* in the midst of the honours done him. (*b.*) To teach his *humanity,* which is to be believed as well as his divinity. (*c.*) To intimate his present state of humiliation, that Nathanael might not expect this king of Israel to appear in external pomp.

b. Yet they are great things which he here foretels: *You shall see heaven opened,* and *the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.* (*a.*) Some understand it literally, as pointing at some particular event. Either, [*a.*] There was some vision of Christ's glory, in which this was exactly fulfilled, which Nathanael was an eye-witness of, as Peter, and James, and John were of his transfiguration. There were many things which Christ did, and those in the presence

of his disciples, which were not written (*ch.* xx. 30), and why not this? Or, [*b.*] It was fulfilled in the many ministrations of the angels to our Lord Jesus, especially that at his ascension, when heaven was opened to receive him, and the angels *ascended* and *descended*, to attend him and to do him honour, and this in the sight of the disciples. Christ's ascension was the great proof of his mission, and much confirmed the faith of his disciples, *ch.* vi. 62. Or, [*c.*] It may refer to Christ's second coming, to judge the world, when the heavens shall be *open*, and every eye shall see him, and the angels of God shall ascend and descend about him, as attendants on him, every one employed; and a busy day it will be. See 2 Thess. i. 10. (*b.*) Others take it figuratively, as speaking of a state or series of things to commence *from henceforth;* and so we may understand it, [*a.*] Of Christ's *miracles.* Nathanael believed, because Christ, as the prophets of old, could tell him things secret; but what is this? Christ is now beginning a dispensation of miracles, much more great and strange than this, as if heaven were opened; and such a power shall be exerted by the Son of man as if the angels, which excel in strength, were continually attending his orders. Immediately after this, Christ began to work miracles, *ch.* ii. 11. Or, [*b.*] Of his *mediation*, and that blessed intercourse which he hath settled between heaven and earth, which his disciples should by degrees be let into the mystery of. *First*, By Christ, as Mediator, they shall see *heaven opened*, that we may *enter into the holiest* by his blood (Heb. x. 19, 20); heaven opened, that by faith we may *look in*, and at length may *go in;* may now behold the glory of the Lord, and hereafter enter into the joy of our Lord. And, *Secondly*, They shall *see angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man.* Through Christ we have communion with and benefit by the holy angels, and things in heaven and things on earth are *reconciled* and *gathered together*. Christ is to us as Jacob's ladder (Gen. xxviii. 12), by whom angels continually ascend and descend for the good of the saints.

CHAP. II.

In the close of the foregoing chapter we had an account of the first disciples whom Jesus called, Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael. These were the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb, Rev. xiv. 4. Now, in this chapter, we have, I. The account of the first miracle which Jesus wrought—turning water into wine, at Cana of Galilee (ver. 1—11), and his appearing at Capernaum, ver. 12. II. The account of the first passover he kept at Jerusalem after he began his public ministry; his driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple (ver. 13—17); and the sign he gave to those who quarrelled with him for it (ver. 18—22), with an account of some almost believers, that followed him, thereupon, for some time (ver. 23—25), but he knew them too well to put any confidence in them.

AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: 2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples to the marriage. 3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. 4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do *it.* 6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare *it.* 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which drew the water knew); the governor of the feast called the bridegroom. 10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

We have here the story of Christ's miraculous conversion of water into wine at a marriage in Cana of Galilee. There were some few so well disposed as to believe in Christ, and to follow him, when he *did no miracle;* yet it was not likely that many should be wrought upon till he had something wherewith to answer those that asked, *What sign showest thou?* He could have wrought miracles before, could have made them the common actions of his life and the common entertainments of his friends; but, miracles being designed for the sacred and solemn seals of his doctrine, he began not to work any till he began to preach his doctrine. Now observe,

I. The occasion of this miracle. Maimonides observes it to be to the honour of Moses that all the signs he did in the wilderness he did *upon necessity;* we needed food, he brought us manna, and so did Christ. Observe,

1. The time: the *third day* after he came into Galilee. The evangelist keeps a journal of occurrences, for no day passed without something extraordinary done or said. Our Master filled up his time better than his servants do, and never lay down at night complaining, as the Roman emperor did, that he had *lost a day.*

2. The place: it was at Cana in Galilee, in the tribe of Asher (Josh. xix. 28), of which, before, it was said that *he shall yield royal dainties*, Gen. xlix. 20. Christ began to work miracles in an obscure corner of the country, remote from Jerusalem, which was the public scene of action, to show that he *sought not honour from men* (*ch.* v. 41), but would put honour *upon the lowly*. His doctrine and miracles would not be so much opposed by the plain and honest Galileans as they would be by the proud and prejudiced rabbies, politicians, and grandees, at Jerusalem.

3. The occasion itself was a *marriage;* probably one or both of the parties were akin to our Lord Jesus. The *mother of Jesus* is said to be *there*, and not to be *called*, as Jesus and his disciples were, which intimates that she was there as one at home. Observe the honour which Christ hereby put upon the ordinance of marriage, that he graced the solemnity of it, not only with his presence, but with his first miracle; because it was instituted and blessed in innocency, because by it he would still *seek a godly seed*, because it resembles the mystical union between him and his church, and because he foresaw that in the papal kingdom, while the marriage ceremony would be unduly *dignified* and advanced into a *sacrament*, the *married state* would be unduly *vilified*, as inconsistent with any sacred function. There was a *marriage*—γάμος, a *marriage-feast*, to grace the solemnity. Marriages were usually celebrated with festivals (Gen. xxix. 22; Judg. xiv. 10), in token of joy and friendly respect, and for the confirming of love.

4. Christ and his mother and disciples were principal guests at this entertainment. *The mother of Jesus* (that was her most honourable title) *was there;* no mention being made of Joseph, we conclude him dead before this. Jesus was *called*, and he came, accepted the invitation, and feasted with them, to teach us to be *respectful* to our relations, and *sociable* with them, though they be mean. Christ was to come in a way different from that of John Baptist, who came *neither eating nor drinking*, Matt. xi. 18, 19. It is the wisdom of the prudent to study how to *improve* conversation rather than how to *decline* it.

(1.) *There was a marriage, and Jesus was called.* Note, [1.] It is very desirable, when there is a *marriage*, to have Jesus Christ *present* at it; to have his spiritual gracious presence, to have the marriage owned and blessed by him: the *marriage* is then *honourable* indeed; and they that *marry in* the Lord (1 Cor. vii. 39) do not marry *without him.* [2.] They that would have Christ with them at their marriage must invite him by prayer; that is the messenger that must be sent to heaven for him; and he will come: *Thou shalt call, and I will answer.* And he will turn the water into wine.

(2.) The disciples also were invited, those five whom he had called (*ch.* i.), for as yet he had no more; they were his family, and were invited with him. They had thrown themselves upon his care, and they soon found that, though he had no wealth, he had good friends. Note, [1.] Those that *follow* Christ shall *feast* with him, they shall *fare* as he *fares*, so he has *bespoken* for them (*ch.* xii. 26): *Where I am, there shall my servant be also.* [2.] Love to Christ is testified by a love to those that are his, for his sake; *our goodness extendeth not to him*, but *to the saints.* Calvin observes how *generous* the maker of the feast was, though he seems to have been but of small substance, to invite four or five strangers more than he thought of, because they were followers of Christ, which shows, saith he, that there is more of freedom, and liberality, and true friendship, in the conversation of some meaner persons than among many of higher rank.

II. The miracle itself. In which observe,

1. They *wanted wine*, *v.* 3. (1.) There was *want* at a *feast;* though much was provided, yet all was spent. While we are in this world we sometimes find ourselves *in straits*, even then when we think ourselves in the *fulness of our sufficiency*. If always *spending*, perhaps all is spent ere we are aware. (2.) There was want at a *marriage feast.* Note, They who, being *married*, are come to *care for the things of the world* must expect *trouble in the flesh*, and count upon disappointment. (3.) It should seem, Christ and his disciples were the occasion of this want, because there was more company than was expected when the provision was made; but they who straiten themselves for Christ shall not lose by him.

2. The *mother of Jesus* solicited him to assist her friends in this strait. We are told (*v.* 3—5) what passed between Christ and his mother upon this occasion.

(1.) She acquaints him with the difficulty they were in (*v.* 3): *She saith unto him, They have no wine.* Some think that she did not expect from him any miraculous supply (he having as yet wrought no miracle), but that she would have him make some *decent* excuse to the company, and make the best of it, to save the bridegroom's reputation, and keep him in countenance; or (as Calvin suggests) would have him make up the want of wine with some holy profitable discourse. But, most probably, she looked for a miracle; for she knew he was now appearing as the great prophet, like unto Moses, who so often seasonably supplied the wants of Israel; and, though this was his first public miracle, perhaps he had sometimes relieved her and her husband in their low estate. The bridegroom might have sent out for more wine, but she was for going to the fountain-head. Note, [1.] We ought to be concerned for the wants and straits of our friends, and not *seek our own things* only. [2.] In our own and our friends' straits it is our wisdom and duty to apply ourselves to Christ by prayer. [3]. In

our addresses to Christ, we must not prescribe to him, but humbly spread our case before him, and then *refer ourselves* to him to do as he pleases.

(2.) He gave her a reprimand for it, for he saw more amiss in it than we do, else he had not treated it thus.—Here is,

[1.] The rebuke itself: *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* As many as Christ loves, he rebukes and chastens. He calls her *woman*, not *mother*. When we begin to be assuming, we should be reminded what we are, *men* and *women*, frail, foolish, and corrupt. The question, τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ, might be read, *What is that to me and thee?* What is it to us if they do want? But it is always used as we render it, *What have I to do with thee?* as Judges xi. 12; 2 Sam. xvi. 10; Ezra iv. 3; Matt. viii. 29. It therefore bespeaks a resentment, yet not at all inconsistent with the reverence and subjection which he paid to his mother, according to the fifth commandment (Luke ii. 51); for there was a time when it was Levi's praise that he *said to his father, I have not known him*, Deut. xxxiii. 9. Now this was intended to be, *First*, A check to his mother for interposing in a matter which was the act of his Godhead, which had no dependence on her, and which she was not the mother of. Though, as man, he was David's Son and hers; yet, as God, he was David's Lord and hers, and he would have her know it. The greatest advancements must not make us forget ourselves and our place, nor the familiarity to which the covenant of grace admits us breed contempt, irreverence, or any kind or degree of presumption. *Secondly*, It was an instruction to others of his relations (many of whom were present here) that they must never expect him to have any regard to his kindred according to the flesh, in his working miracles, or that therein he should gratify them, who in this matter were no more to him than other people. In the things of God we must not *know faces*. *Thirdly*, It is a standing testimony against that idolatry which he foresaw his church would in after-ages sink into, in giving undue honours to the virgin Mary, a crime which the Roman catholics, as they call themselves, are notoriously guilty of, when they call her the *queen of heaven*, the *salvation of the world*, their *mediatrix*, their *life* and *hope*; not only depending upon her merit and intercession, but beseeching her to *command her Son* to do them good: *Monstra te esse matrem—Show that thou art his mother. Jussu matris impera salvatori—Lay thy maternal commands on the Saviour.* Does he not here expressly say, when a miracle was to be wrought, even in the days of his humiliation, and his mother did but tacitly hint an intercession, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* This was plainly designed either to *prevent* or *aggravate* such gross idolatry, such horrid blasphemy. The Son of God is appointed our Advocate with the Father; but the mother of our Lord was never designed to be our advocate with the Son.

[2.] The reason of this rebuke: *Mine hour is not yet come.* For every thing Christ did, and that was done to him, he had *his hour*, the *fixed* time and the *fittest* time, which was punctually observed. *First*, "Mine hour for *working miracles* is not yet come." Yet afterwards he wrought this, before the hour, because he foresaw it would confirm the faith of his infant disciples (*v.* 11), which was the end of all his miracles: so that this was an earnest of the many miracles he would work when his *hour was come*. *Secondly*, "Mine hour of working miracles *openly* is *not yet come*; therefore do not talk of it thus *publicly*." *Thirdly*, "Is *not the hour* of my exemption from thy authority *yet come*, now that I have begun to act as a prophet?" So Gregory Nyssen. *Fourthly*, "Mine hour for working *this miracle* is not yet come." His mother moved him to help them *when the wine began to fail* (so it may be read, *v.* 3), but his hour was not yet come till it was quite spent, and there was a *total want*; not only to prevent any suspicion of mixing some of the wine that was left with the water, but to teach us that man's extremity is God's opportunity to appear for the help and relief of his people. Then *his hour is come* when we are reduced to the utmost strait, and know not what to do. This encouraged those that waited for him to believe that though his hour was not *yet come* it would come. Note, The delays of mercy are not to be construed the denials of prayer. *At the end it shall speak.*

(3.) Notwithstanding this, she encouraged herself with expectations that he would help her friends in this strait, for she bade the servants *observe his orders*, *v.* 5. [1.] She took the reproof very submissively, and did not reply to it. It is best not to deserve reproof from Christ, but next best to be meek and quiet under it, and to count it a kindness, Ps. cxli. 5. [2.] She kept her hope in Christ's mercy, that he would yet grant her desire. When we come to God in Christ for any mercy, two things discourage us:—*First*, Sense of *our own follies* and infirmities "Surely such imperfect prayers as ours cannot speed." *Secondly*, Sense of *our Lord's frowns and rebukes*. Afflictions are continued; deliverances delayed, and God seems angry at our prayers. This was the case of the mother of our Lord here, and yet she encourages herself with hope that he will at length give in an answer of peace, to teach us to wrestle with God by faith and fervency in prayer, even when he seems in his providence to walk contrary to us. We must *against hope believe in hope*, Rom. iv. 18. [3.] She directed the servants to have an eye *to him* immediately, and not to make their applications to her, as it is probable *they had done*. She quits all pretensions to an *influence* upon him, or *intercession* with him; let their souls

wait only on him, Ps. lxii. 5. [4.] She directed them punctually to observe his orders, without disputing, or asking questions. Being conscious to herself of a fault in *prescribing* to him, she cautions the servants to take heed of the same fault, and to attend both his time and his way for supply: "*Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it,* though you may think it ever so improper. If he saith, Give the guests water, when they call for wine, do it. If he saith, Pour out from the bottoms of the vessels that are spent, do it. He can make a few drops of wine multiply to so many draughts." Note, Those that expect Christ's *favours* must with an implicit obedience observe his *orders*. The way of duty is the way to mercy; and Christ's methods must not be objected against.

(4.) Christ did at length miraculously supply them; for he is often better than his word, but never worse.

[1.] The miracle itself was *turning water into wine;* the substance of water acquiring a new form, and having all the accidents and qualities of wine. Such a *transformation* is a *miracle;* but the popish *transubstantiation,* the substance changed, the accidents remaining the same, is a monster. By this Christ showed himself to be the God of nature, who maketh the earth to bring forth wine, Ps. civ. 14, 15. The extracting of the blood of the grape every year from the moisture of the earth is no less a work of power, though, being according to the common law of nature, it is not such a work of wonder, as this. The beginning of Moses's miracles was turning water into blood (Exod. iv. 9; vii. 20), the beginning of Christ's miracles was turning water into wine; which intimates the difference between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ. The curse of the law turns water into blood, common comforts into bitterness and terror; the blessing of the gospel turns water into wine. Christ hereby showed that his errand into the world was to heighten and improve creature-comforts to all believers, and make them comforts indeed. Shiloh is said to *wash his garments in wine* (Gen. xlix. 11), the water for washing being *turned into wine.* And the gospel call is, *Come ye to the waters, and buy wine,* Isa. lv. 1.

[2.] The circumstances of it magnified it and freed it from all suspicion of cheat or collusion; for,

First, It was done in water-pots (*v.* 6): *There were set there six water-pots of stone.* Observe, 1. For what use these water-pots were intended: for the legal purifications from ceremonial pollutions enjoined by the law of God, and many more by the tradition of the elders. The *Jews eat not, except they wash often* (Mark vii. 3), and they used much water in their washing, for which reason here were six large water-pots provided. It was a saying among them, *Qui multâ utitur aquâ in lavando, multas consequetur in hoc mundo divitias—He who uses much water in washing will gain much wealth in this world.* 2. To what use Christ put them, quite different from what they were intended for; to be the receptacles of the miraculous wine. Thus Christ came to bring in the grace of the gospel, which is as *wine,* that cheereth God and man (Judg. ix. 13), instead of the shadows of the law, which were as water, *weak and beggarly elements.* These were *water-pots,* that had never been used to have wine in them; and of *stone,* which is not apt to retain the scent of former liquors, if ever they had had wine in them. They contained *two or three firkins apiece;* two or three *measures, baths,* or *ephahs;* the quantity is uncertain, but very considerable. We may be sure that it was not intended to be all drank at this feast, but for a further kindness to the new-married couple, as the multiplied oil was to the poor widow, out of which she might *pay her debt,* and *live of the rest,* 2 Kings iv. 7. Christ gives like himself, gives abundantly, according to his riches in glory. It is the penman's language to say, *They contained two or three firkins,* for the Holy Spirit could have ascertained just how much; thus (as *ch.* vi. 19) teaching us to speak cautiously, and not confidently, of those things of which we have not good assurance.

Secondly, The water-pots were filled *up to the brim* by the servants at Christ's word, *v.* 7. As Moses, the servant of the Lord, when God bade him, went to the rock, to draw water; so these servants, when Christ bade them, went to the water, to fetch wine. Note, Since no difficulties can be opposed to the arm of God's power, no improbabilities are to be objected against the word of his command.

Thirdly, The miracle was wrought suddenly, and in such a manner as greatly magnified it.

a. As soon as they had filled the water-pots, presently he said, *Draw out now* (*v.* 8), and it was done, (*a.*) Without any ceremony, in the eye of the spectators. One would have thought, as Naaman, he should have come out, and *stood,* and *called on the name of God,* 2 Kings v. 11. No, he sits still in his place, says not a word, but *wills* the thing, and so works it. Note, Christ does great things and marvellous *without noise,* works manifest changes in a hidden way. Sometimes Christ, in working miracles, used words and signs, but it was *for their sakes that stood by, ch.* xi. 42. (*b.*) Without any hesitation or uncertainty in his own breast. He did not say, *Draw out now,* and let me *taste it,* questioning whether the thing were done as he willed it or no; but with the greatest assurance imaginable, though it was his *first miracle,* he recommends it to the master of the feast *first.* As he knew what he *would* do, so he knew what he *could* do, and made no essay in his work; but all was good, very good, even in the beginning.

b. Our Lord Jesus directed the servants, (*a.*) *To draw it out;* not to let it alone in

the vessel, to be admired, but to *draw it out*, to be drank. Note, [*a.*] Christ's works are all *for use;* he gives no man a talent to be *buried*, but to be *traded with*. Has he turned thy water into wine, given thee knowledge and grace? It is to *profit withal;* and therefore *draw out now*. [*b.*] Those that would know Christ must make trial of him, must attend upon him in the use of ordinary means, and then may expect extraordinary influence. That which is *laid up* for all that *fear God* is *wrought for those that trust in him* (Ps. xxxi. 19), that by the exercise of faith *draw out* what is *laid up*. (*b.*) To present it to *the governor of the feast*. Some think that this *governor of the feast* was only the chief guest, that sat at the upper end of the table; but, if so, surely our Lord Jesus should have had that place, for he was, upon all accounts, the principal guest; but it seems another had the uppermost room, probably one that *loved* it (Matt. xxiii. 6), and *chose* it, Luke xiv. 7. And Christ, according to his own rule, *sat down in the lowest room;* but, though he was not treated as the Master of the feast, he kindly approved himself a friend to the feast, and, if not its founder, yet its best benefactor. Others think that this *governor* was the inspector and monitor of the feast: the same with Plutarch's *symposiarcha*, whose office it was to see that each had enough, and none did exceed, and that there were no indecencies or disorders. Note, Feasts have need of governors, because too many, when they are at feasts, have not the government of themselves. Some think that this *governor* was the *chaplain*, some priest or Levite that craved a blessing and gave thanks, and Christ would have the cup brought to him, that he might bless it, and bless God for it; for the extraordinary tokens of Christ's presence and power were not to supersede, or jostle out, the ordinary rules and methods of piety and devotion.

Fourthly, The wine which was thus miraculously provided was of the best and richest kind, which was acknowledged by the governor of the feast; and that it was really so, and not his fancy, is certain, because he knew not whence it was, *v.* 9, 10. 1. It was certain that this was *wine*. The governor knew this when he drank it, though he knew not *whence it was;* the servants knew whence it was, but had not yet tasted it. If the taster had seen the drawing of it, or the drawers had had the tasting of it, something might have been imputed to fancy; but now no room is left for suspicion. 2. That it was the best wine. Note, Christ's works commend themselves even to those that know not their author. The products of miracles were always the best in their kind. This wine had a *stronger body*, and *better flavour*, than ordinary. This the governor of the feast takes notice of to the bridegroom, with an air of pleasantness, as *uncommon*. (1.) The common method was otherwise. Good wine is brought out to the best advantage at the beginning of a feast, when the guests have their heads clear and their appetites fresh, and can relish it, and will commend it; but *when they have well drank*, when their heads are confused, and their appetites palled, good wine is but thrown away upon them, worse will serve then. See the vanity of all the pleasures of sense; they soon surfeit, but never satisfy; the longer they are enjoyed, the less pleasant they grow. (2.) This bridegroom obliged his friends with a reserve of the best wine for the grace-cup: *Thou hast kept the good wine until now;* not knowing to whom they were indebted for this good wine, he returns the thanks of the table to the bridegroom. *She did not know that I gave her corn and wine*, Hos. ii. 8. Now, [1.] Christ, in providing thus plentifully for the guests, though he hereby allows a sober cheerful use of wine, especially in times of rejoicing (Neh. viii. 10), yet he does not invalidate his own caution, nor invade it, in the least, which is, that our hearts be not *at any time*, no not at a marriage feast, *overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness*, Luke xxi. 34. When Christ provided so much *good wine* for them that had *well drunk*, he intended to try their sobriety, and to teach them *how to abound*, as well as *how to want*. Temperance *per force* is a thankless virtue; but if divine providence gives us abundance of the delights of sense, and divine grace enables us to use them moderately, this is self-denial that is praiseworthy. He also intended that some should be left for the confirmation of the truth of the miracle to the faith of others. And we have reason to think that the guests at this table were so well *taught*, or at least were now so well awed by the presence of Christ, that none of them abused this wine to excess. These two considerations, drawn from this story, may be sufficient at any time to fortify us against temptations to intemperance: *First*, That our meat and drink are the *gifts of God's bounty* to us, and we owe our liberty to use them, and our comfort in the use of them, to the mediation of Christ; it is therefore ungrateful and impious to abuse them. *Secondly*, That, wherever we are, Christ has his eye upon us; we should *eat bread before God* (Exod. xviii. 12), and then we should not *feed ourselves without fear*. [2.] He has given us a specimen of the method he takes in dealing with those that deal with him, which is, to reserve the *best* for the *last*, and therefore they must *deal upon trust*. The recompence of their services and sufferings is reserved for the other world; it is a glory *to be revealed*. The pleasures of sin give their colour in the cup, but *at the last bite;* but the pleasures of religion will be *pleasures for evermore*.

III. In the conclusion of this story (*v.* 11) we are told, 1. That this was *the beginning of*

miracles which Jesus did. Many miracles had been wrought *concerning* him at his birth and baptism, and he himself was the greatest miracle of all; but this was the first that was wrought *by* him. He could have wrought miracles when he disputed with the doctors, but his hour was not come. He had power, but there was a *time of the hiding of his power*. 2. That herein he *manifested his glory;* hereby he proved himself to be the Son of God, and his glory to be that of the only-begotten of the Father. He also discovered the nature and end of his office; the power of a God, and the grace of a Saviour, appearing in all his miracles, and particularly in this, manifested the glory of the long-expected Messiah. 3. That *his disciples believed on him.* Those whom he had called (*ch.* i.), who had seen no miracle, and yet followed him, now saw this, shared in it, and had their faith strengthened by it. Note, (1.) Even the faith that is true is at first but weak. The strongest men were once babes, so were the strongest Christians. (2.) The manifesting of the glory of Christ is the great confirmation of the faith of Christians.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days. 13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, 14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. 17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. 18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? 19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Here we have,

I. The short visit Christ made to Capernaum, *v.* 12. It was a large and populous city, about a day's journey from Cana; it is called *his own city* (Matt. ix. 1), because he made it his head-quarters in Galilee, and what little rest he had was there. It was a place of concourse, and *therefore* Christ chose it, that the fame of his doctrine and miracles might thence spread the further. Observe,

1. The company that attended him thither: *his mother, his brethren, and his disciples.* Wherever Christ went, (1.) He *would not* go alone, but would take those with him who had put themselves under his guidance, that he might instruct them, and that they might attest his miracles. (2.) He *could not* go alone, but they would follow him, because they liked the sweetness either of his doctrine or of his wine, *ch.* vi. 26. His mother, though he had lately given her to understand that in the works of his ministry he should pay no more respect to her than to any other person, yet followed him; not to intercede with him, but to learn of him. His *brethren* also and relations, who were at the marriage and were wrought upon by the miracle there, and *his disciples,* who attended him wherever he went. It should seem, people were more affected with Christ's miracles at first than they were afterwards, when custom made them seem less strange.

2. His continuance there, which was at this time *not many days,* designing now only to *begin* the acquaintance he would afterwards *improve* there. Christ was still upon the remove, would not confine his usefulness to *one* place, because *many* needed him. And he would teach his followers to look upon themselves but as *sojourners* in this world, and his ministers to follow their opportunities, and go where their work led them. We do not now find Christ in the synagogues, but he privately instructed his friends, and thus entered upon his work *by degrees.* It is good for young ministers to accustom themselves to pious and edifying discourse in private, that they may with the better preparation, and greater awe, approach their public work. He did not stay long at Capernaum, because the passover was at hand, and he must attend it at Jerusalem; for every thing is beautiful in its season. The less good must give way to the greater, and all the dwellings of Jacob must give place to the gates of Zion.

II. The passover he kept at Jerusalem; it is the *first* after his baptism, and the evangelist takes notice of all the passovers he kept henceforward, which were four in all, the *fourth* that at which he suffered (three years after this), and half a year was now past since his baptism. Christ, being *made*

under the law, observed the passover at Jerusalem; see Exod. xxiii. 17. Thus he taught us by his example a strict observance of divine institutions, and a diligent attendance on religious assemblies. He went up to Jerusalem when *the passover was at hand*, that he might be there *with the first*. It is called *the Jews' passover*, because it was peculiar to them (Christ is *our* Passover); now shortly God will no longer own it for his. Christ kept the passover at Jerusalem yearly, ever since he was twelve years old, in obedience to the law; but now that he has entered upon his public ministry we may expect something more from him than before; and two things we are here told he did there:—

1. He *purged the temple*, *v.* 14—17. Observe here,

(1.) The first place we find him in at Jerusalem was the *temple*, and, it should seem, he did not make any public appearance till he came thither; for his presence and preaching there were that glory of the latter house which was to *exceed the glory of the former*, Hag. ii. 9. It was foretold (Mal. iii. 1): *I will send my messenger*, John Baptist; he never preached in the temple, but *the Lord, whom ye seek*, he shall *suddenly come to his temple*, suddenly after the appearing of John Baptist; so that this was the time, and the temple the place, when, and where, the Messiah was to be expected.

(2.) The first work we find him at in the temple was the *purging* of it; for so it was foretold there (Mal. iii. 2, 3): *He shall sit as a refiner and purify the sons of Levi*. Now was come the *time of reformation*. Christ came to be the great reformer; and, according to the method of the reforming kings of Judah, he first *purged out* what was amiss (and that used to be passover-work too, as in Hezekiah's time, 2 Chron. xxx. 14, 15, and Josiah's, 2 Kings xxiii. 4, &c.), and then taught them to do well. First *purge out the old leaven*, and then *keep the feast*. Christ's design in coming into the world was to reform the world; and he expects that all who come to him should reform their hearts and lives, Gen. xxxv. 2. And this he has taught us by purging the temple. See here,

[1.] What were the corruptions that were to be purged out. He found a market in one of the courts of the temple, that which was called the *court of the Gentiles*, within the *mountain of that house*. There, *First*, They sold *oxen, and sheep, and doves*, for sacrifice; we will suppose, not for common use, but for the convenience of those who came out of the country, and could not bring their sacrifices *in kind* along with them; see Deut. xiv. 24—26. This *market* perhaps had been kept by the pool of Bethesda (*ch.* v. 2), but was admitted into the temple by the chief priests, for filthy lucre; for, no doubt, the rents for standing there, and fees for searching the beasts sold there, and certifying that they were *without blemish*, would be a considerable revenue to them. Great corruptions in the church owe their rise to the love of money, 1 Tim. vi. 5, 10. *Secondly*, They *changed money*, for the convenience of those that were to pay a half-shekel *in specie* every year, by way of poll, for the service of the tabernacle (Exod. xxx. 12), and no doubt they got by it.

[2.] What course our Lord took to purge out those corruptions. He had seen these in the temple formerly, when he was in a private station; but never went about to drive them out till now, when he had taken upon him the public character of a prophet. He did not complain to the chief priests, for he knew they countenanced those corruptions. But he himself,

First, Drove out the sheep and oxen, and those that *sold them*, out of the temple. He never used *force* to drive any *into* the temple, but only to drive those out that profaned it. He did not seize the sheep and oxen for himself, did not *distrain* and impound them, though he found them *damage faissant—actual trespassers* upon his Father's ground; he only drove them out, and their owners with them. He made a scourge of *small cords*, which probably they had led their sheep and oxen with, and thrown them away upon the ground, whence Christ gathered them. Sinners prepare the scourges with which they themselves will be driven out from the temple of the Lord. He did not make a scourge to chastise the offenders (his punishments are of another nature), but only to drive out the cattle; he aimed no further than at reformation. See Rom. xiii. 3, 4; 2 Cor. x. 8.

Secondly, He *poured out the changers' money*, τὸ κέρμα—*the small money*—the *Nummorum Famulus*. In *pouring out* the money, he showed his contempt of it; he threw it to the ground, to the earth as it *was*. In *overthrowing* the tables, he showed his displeasure against those that make religion a matter of worldly gain. Money-changers in the temple are the scandal of it. Note, In reformation, it is good to make thorough work; he *drove them all out*; and not only threw out the money, but, in overturning the tables, threw out the trade too.

Thirdly, He said to them that sold doves (sacrifices for the poor), *Take these things hence*. The doves, though they took up less room, and were a less nuisance than the oxen and sheep, yet must not be allowed there. The sparrows and swallows were welcome, that were left to God's providence (Ps. lxxxiv. 3), but not the doves, that were appropriated to man's profit. God's temple must not be made a pigeon-house. But see Christ's prudence in his zeal. When he drove out the sheep and oxen, the owners might follow them; when he poured out the money, they might gather it up again; but, if he had turned the doves flying, perhaps they could not have been retrieved; therefore to them that sold doves he said, *Take these things hence*. Note, Discretion must always

guide and govern our zeal, that we do nothing unbecoming ourselves, or mischievous to others.

Fourthly, He gave them a good reason for what he did: *Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.* Reason for conviction should accompany force for correction.

a. Here is a reason why they should not profane the temple, because it was the *house of God*, and not to be made a house of merchandise. Merchandise is a good thing in the exchange, but not in the temple. This was, (*a.*) to *alienate* that which was dedicated to the honour of God; it was *sacrilege;* it was robbing God. (*b.*) It was to debase that which was solemn and awful, and to make it mean. (*c.*) It was to disturb and distract those services in which men ought to be most solemn, serious, and intent. It was particularly an affront to the *sons of the stranger* in their worship to be forced to herd themselves with the sheep and oxen, and to be distracted in their worship by the noise of a market, for this market was kept in the court of the Gentiles. (*d.*) It was to make the business of religion subservient to a secular interest; for the holiness of the place must advance the market, and promote the sale of their commodities. Those make God's house a house of merchandise, [*a.*] Whose minds are filled with cares about worldly business when they are attending on religious exercises, as those, Amos viii. 5; Ezek. xxxiii. 31. [*b.*] Who perform divine offices for filthy lucre, and sell the gifts of the Holy Ghost, Acts viii. 18.

b. Here is a reason why he was concerned to purge it, because it *was his Father's house.* And, (*a.*) Therefore he had authority to purge it, for he was faithful, as a Son *over his own house.* Heb iii. 5, 6. In calling God his Father, he intimates that he was the Messiah, of whom it was said, *He shall build a house for my name, and I will be his Father,* 2 Sam. vii. 13, 14. (*b.*) Therefore he had a zeal for the purging of it: "It is *my Father's house*, and therefore I cannot bear to see it profaned, and *him* dishonoured." Note, If God be our Father in heaven, and it be therefore our desire that his name may be sanctified, it cannot but be our grief to see it polluted. Christ's purging the temple thus may justly be reckoned among his *wonderful works. Inter omnia signa quæ fecit Dominus, hoc mihi videtur esse mirabilius—Of all Christ's wonderful works this appears to me the most wonderful.*—Hieron. Considering, [*a.*] That he did it without the *assistance* of any of his *friends;* probably it had been no hard matter to have raised the *mob*, who had a great veneration for the temple, against these profaners of it; but Christ never countenanced any thing that was tumultuous or disorderly. There was none to *uphold*, but his own arm did it. [*b.*] That he did it without the *resistance* of any of his *enemies*, either the market-people themselves, or the chief priests that gave them their licences, and had the *posse templi—temple force*, at their command. But the corruption was too plain to be justified; sinners' own consciences are reformers' best friends; yet that was not all, there was a divine power put forth herein, a power over the spirits of men; and in this non-resistance of theirs that scripture was fulfilled (Mal. iii. 2, 3), *Who shall stand when he appeareth?*

Fifthly, Here is the remark which his disciples made upon it (*v.* 17): *They remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* They were somewhat surprised at first to see him to whom they were directed as the *Lamb of God* in such a heat, and him whom they believed to be the *King of Israel* take so little state upon him as to do this himself; but one scripture came to their thoughts, which taught them to reconcile this action both with the meekness of the *Lamb of God* and with the majesty of the *King of Israel;* for David, speaking of the Messiah, takes notice of his *zeal for God's house*, as so great that it even *ate him up*, it made him forget himself, Ps. lxix. 9. Observe, 1. The disciples came to understand the meaning of what Christ did, by remembering the scriptures: *They remembered* now *that it was written.* Note, The word of God and the works of God do mutually explain and illustrate each other. Dark scriptures are expounded by their accomplishment in providence, and difficult providences are made easy by comparing them with the scriptures. See of what great use it is to the disciples of Christ to be *ready* and *mighty* in the scriptures, and to have their memories well stored with scripture truths, by which they will be *furnished for every good work*, 2. The scripture they remembered was very apposite: *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* David was in this a type of Christ that he was *zealous for God's house*, Ps. cxxxii. 2, 3. What he did for it was *with all his might;* see 1 Chron xxix. 2. The latter part of that verse (Ps. lxix. 9) is applied to Christ (Rom. xv. 3), as the former part of it here. All the graces that were to be found among the Old-Testament saints were eminently in Christ, and particularly this of zeal for the house of God, and in them, as they were patterns to us, so they were types of him. Observe, (1.) Jesus Christ was zealously affected to the house of God, his church: he loved it, and was always jealous for its honour and welfare. (2.) This zeal did even *eat him up;* it made him *humble* himself, and *spend* himself, and *expose* himself. *My zeal has consumed me*, Ps. cxix. 139. Zeal for the house of God forbids us to consult our own credit, ease, and safety, when they come in competition with our duty and Christ's service, and sometimes carries on our souls in our duty so far and so fast that our bodies cannot keep pace with them, and makes us as deaf as our Master was to those who suggested, *Spare thyself.*

The grievances here redressed might seem but small, and such as should have been connived at; but such was Christ's zeal that he could not bear even *those* that *sold and bought in the temple. Si ibi ebrios inveniret quid faceret Dominus!* (saith St. Austin.) *If he had found drunkards in the temple, how much more would he have been displeased!*

2. Christ, having thus purged the temple, gave a sign to those who demanded it to prove his authority for so doing. Observe here,

(1.) Their demand of a sign: *Then answered the Jews,* that is the multitude of the people, with their leaders. Being Jews, they should rather have stood by him, and assisted him to vindicate the honour of their temple; but, instead of this, they objected against it. Note, Those who apply themselves in good earnest to the work of reformation must expect to meet with opposition. When they could object nothing against the thing itself, they questioned his authority to do it: "*What sign showest thou unto us,* to prove thyself authorized and commissioned to do these things?" It was indeed a good work to purge the temple; but what had he to do to undertake it, who was in no office there? They looked upon it as an act of jurisdiction, and that he must prove himself *a prophet, yea, more than a prophet.* But was not the thing itself sign enough? His ability to drive so many from their posts, without opposition, was a proof of his authority; he that was armed with such a divine power was surely armed with a divine commission. *What ailed these* buyers and sellers, *that they fled, that they were driven back?* Surely it was *at the presence of the Lord* (Ps. cxiv. 5, 7), no less a presence.

(2.) Christ's answer to this demand, *v.* 19. He did not immediately work a miracle to convince them, but gave them a sign in something *to come,* the truth of which must appear by the event, according to Deut. xviii. 21, 22.

Now, [1.] The sign that he gives them is his own *death* and *resurrection.* He refers them to that which would be, *First,* His *last* sign. If they would not be convinced by what they saw and heard, let them *wait. Secondly,* The *great sign* to prove him to be the Messiah; for concerning him it was foretold that he should be bruised (Isa. liii. 5), *cut off* (Dan. ix. 26), and yet that he should not see corruption, Ps. xvi. 10. These things were fulfilled in the blessed Jesus, and therefore *truly he was the Son of God,* and had authority in the temple, his Father's house.

[2.] He foretels his death and resurrection, not in plain terms, as he often did to his disciples, but in figurative expressions; as afterwards, when he gave this for a sign, he called it the *sign of the prophet Jonas,* so here, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.* Thus he spoke in parables to those who were willingly ignorant, that *they might not perceive,* Matt. xiii. 13, 14. Those that will not see shall not see. Nay, this figurative speech used here proved such a *stumbling-block* to them that it was produced in evidence against him at his trial to prove him a blasphemer. Matt. xxvi. 60, 61. Had they humbly asked him the meaning of what he said, he would have told them, and it had been a savour of life unto life to them, but they were resolved to cavil, and it proved a savour of death unto death. They that would not be convinced were hardened, and the manner of expressing this prediction occasioned the accomplishment of the prediction itself. *First,* He foretels his death by the Jews' malice, in these words, *Destroy you this temple;* that is, "You will destroy it, I know you will. I will permit you to destroy it." Note, Christ, even at the beginning of his ministry, had a clear foresight of all his sufferings at the end of it, and yet went on cheerfully in it. It is good, at *setting out,* to expect the *worst. Secondly,* He foretels his resurrection by his own power: In *three days I will raise it up.* There were others that *were raised,* but Christ raised himself, resumed his own life.

[3.] He chose to express this by *destroying* and *re-edifying* the temple, *First,* Because he was now to justify himself in purging the temple, which they had profaned; as if he had said, "You that defile one temple will destroy another; and I will prove my authority to *purge* what you have *defiled* by *raising* what you will *destroy.*" The profaning of the temple is the *destroying* of it, and its reformation its *resurrection. Secondly,* Because the death of Christ was indeed the destruction of the Jewish temple, the procuring cause of it; and his resurrection was the raising up of another temple, the gospel church, Zech. vi. 12. The ruins of their place and *nation* (*ch.* xi. 48) were the riches of the world. See Amos ix. 11; Acts xv. 16.

(3.) Their cavil at this answer: "*Forty and six years was this temple in building, v.* 20. Temple work was always slow work, and canst thou make such quick work of it?" Now here, [1.] They show *some knowledge;* they could tell how long the temple was in building. Dr. Lightfoot computes that it was just forty-six years from the founding of Zerubbabel's temple, in the second year of Cyrus, to the complete settlement of the temple service, in the 32d year of Artaxerxes; and the same from Herod's beginning to build this temple, in the 18th year of his reign, to this very time, when the Jews said that this was just forty-six years: ᾠκοδομήθη —*hath this temple been built.* [2.] They show *more ignorance, First,* Of the *meaning of Christ's words.* Note, Men often run into gross mistakes by understanding that literally which the scripture speaks figuratively. What abundance of mischief has been done by interpreting, *This is my body,* after a corporal and carnal manner! *Secondly,*

Of *the almighty power of Christ*, as if he could do no more than another man. Had they known that this was he who *built all things* in six days they would not have made it such an absurdity that he should build a temple in three days.

(4.) A vindication of Christ's answer from their cavil. The difficulty is soon solved by explaining the terms: *He spoke of the temple of his body*, *v.* 21. Though Christ had discovered a great respect for the temple, in *purging* it, yet he will have us know that the holiness of it, which he was so jealous for, was but *typical*, and leads us to the consideration of another temple of which that was but a shadow, the substance being Christ, Heb. ix. 9; Col. ii. 17. Some think that when he said, Destroy *this* temple, he pointed to his own body, or laid his hand upon it; however, it is certain that he *spoke of the temple of his body*. Note, The body of Christ is the true temple, of which that at Jerusalem was a type. [1.] Like the temple, it was built by immediate divine direction: "*A body hast thou prepared me*, 1 Chron. xxviii. 19. [2.] Like the temple, it was a *holy house;* it is called *that holy thing*. [3.] It was, like the temple, the habitation of God's glory; there the eternal Word dwelt, the true shechinah. He is *Emmanuel—God with us*. [4.] The temple was the place and *medium* of intercourse between God and Israel: there God revealed himself to them; there they presented themselves and their services to him. Thus by Christ God speaks to us, and we speak to him. Worshippers looked *towards* that house, 1 Kings viii. 30, 35. So we must worship God with an eye to Christ.

(5.) A reflection which the disciples made upon this, long after, inserted here, to illustrate the story (*v.* 22): *When he was risen from the dead*, some years after, *his disciples remembered that he had said this*. We found them, *v.* 17, remembering what had been *written before of him*, and here we find them remembering what they had *heard from him*. Note, The memories of Christ's disciples should be like the treasure of the good householder, furnished with things both *new* and *old*, Matt. xiii. 52. Now observe,

[1.] *When they remembered* that saying: *When he was risen from the dead*. It seems, they did not at this time fully understand Christ's meaning, for they were as yet but babes in knowledge; but they laid up the saying in their hearts, and afterwards it became both intelligible and useful. Note, It is good to *hear for the time to come*, Isa. xlii. 23. The juniors in years and profession should treasure up those truths of which at present they do not well understand either the meaning or the use, for they will be serviceable to them hereafter, when they come to greater proficiency. It was said of the scholars of Pythagoras that his precepts seemed to freeze in them till they were forty years old, and then they began to thaw; so this saying of Christ revived in the memories of his disciples *when he was risen from the dead;* and why then? *First*, Because *then* the Spirit was poured out to bring things to their remembrance which Christ had said to them, and to make them both *easy* and *ready* to them, *ch.* xiv. 26. That very day that Christ rose from the dead he *opened their understandings*, Luke xxiv. 45. *Secondly*, Because then this saying of Christ was fulfilled. When the temple of his body had been *destroyed* and was *raised again*, and that upon the *third day*, then they remembered this among other words which Christ had said to this purport. Note, It contributes much to the understanding of the scripture to observe the fulfilling of the scripture. The event will expound the prophecy.

[2.] What use they made of it: *They believed the scripture, and the word that Jesus had said;* their belief of these was confirmed and received fresh support and vigour. They were slow of heart to believe (Luke xxiv. 25), but they were *sure*. The *scripture* and the *word of Christ* are here put together, not because they concur and exactly agree together, but because they mutually illustrate and strengthen each other. When the disciples saw both what they had read in the Old Testament, and what they had heard from Christ's own mouth, fulfilled in his death and resurrection, they were the more confirmed in their belief of both.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. 24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, 25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

We have here an account of the success, the poor success, of Christ's preaching and miracles at Jerusalem, while he kept the passover there. Observe,

I. That our Lord Jesus, when he was at Jerusalem at the passover, did preach and work miracles. People's *believing on him* implied that he preached; and it is expressly said, *They saw the miracles he did*. He was now in Jerusalem, the holy city, whence the *word of the Lord* was to go *forth*. His residence was mostly in Galilee, and therefore when he was *in Jerusalem* he was very busy. The time was holy time, *the feast-day*, time appointed for the service of God; at the passover the *Levites taught the good knowledge of the Lord* (2 Chron. xxx. 22), and Christ took that opportunity of preaching, when the concourse of people was great, and thus he would own and honour the divine institution of the passover.

II. That hereby many were brought to *believe in his name*, to acknowledge him a

teacher come from God, as Nicodemus did (*ch.* iii. 2), a great prophet; and, probably, some of those who *looked for redemption in Jerusalem* believed him to be the Messiah promised, so ready were they to welcome the first appearance of that *bright and morning star.*

III. That yet *Jesus did not commit himself unto them* (v. 24): *οὐκ ἐπίστευεν ἑαυτὸν αὐτοῖς—He did not trust himself with them.* It is the same word that is used for *believing* in him. So that to believe in Christ is to *commit ourselves* to him and to his guidance. Christ did not see cause to repose any confidence in these new converts at Jerusalem, where he had many enemies that sought to destroy him, either, 1. Because they were *false,* at least some of them, and would betray him if they had an opportunity, or were strongly tempted to do so. He had more disciples that he could trust among the Galileans than among the dwellers at Jerusalem. In dangerous times and places, it is wisdom to take heed in whom you confide; *μέμνησο ἀπιστεῖν—learn to distrust.* Or, 2. Because they were *weak,* and I would hope that this was the worst of it; not that they were *treacherous* and designed him a mischief, but, (1.) They were *timorous,* and wanted zeal and courage, and might perhaps be frightened to do a wrong thing. In times of difficulty and danger, cowards are not fit to be trusted. Or, (2.) They were *tumultuous,* and wanted discretion and management. These in Jerusalem perhaps had their expectations of the *temporal* reign of the Messiah more raised than others, and, in that expectation, would be ready to give some bold strokes at the government if Christ would have *committed himself to them* and put himself at the head of them; but he would not, for his kingdom is not of this world. We should be shy of turbulent unquiet people, as our Master here was, though they profess to *believe in Christ,* as these did.

IV. That the reason why he did not *commit himself* to them was because he *knew* them (*v.* 25), knew the wickedness of some and the weakness of others. The evangelist takes this occasion to assert Christ's omniscience. 1. He *knew all men,* not only their names and faces, as it is possible for us to know many, but their nature, dispositions, affections, designs, as we do not know *any man,* scarcely *ourselves.* He knows *all men,* for his powerful hand made them all, his piercing eye sees them all, sees into them. He knows his *subtle enemies,* and all their secret projects; his *false friends,* and their true characters; what they really are, whatever they pretend to be. He knows them that are truly his, knows their integrity, and knows their infirmity too. He *knows their frame.* 2. He *needed not that any should testify of man.* His knowledge was not by information from others, but by his own infallible intuition. It is the infelicity of earthly princes that they must see with other men's eyes, and hear with other men's ears, and take things as they are represented to them; but Christ goes purely upon his own knowledge. Angels are his messengers, but not his spies, for *his own eyes run to and fro through the earth,* 2 Chron. xvi. 9. This may comfort us in reference to Satan's accusations, that Christ will not take men's characters from him. 3. He *knew what was in man;* in particular persons, in the nature and race of man. We know what is done *by men;* Christ knows what is *in them, tries the heart and the reins.* This is the prerogative of that essential eternal Word, Heb. iv. 12, 13. We invade his prerogative if we presume to judge men's hearts. How fit is Christ to be the *Saviour of men,* very fit to be the physician, who has such a perfect knowledge of the patient's state and case, temper and distemper; knows what is in him! How fit also to be the *Judge of all!* For the judgment of him who knows *all men,* all *in* men, must needs be *according to truth.*

Now this is all the success of Christ's preaching and miracles at Jerusalem, in this journey. The Lord comes to his temple, and none come to him but a parcel of weak simple people, that he can neither have *credit* from nor put *confidence* in; yet he shall at length *see of the travail of his soul.*

CHAP. III.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's discourse with Nicodemus, a Pharisee, concerning the great mysteries of the gospel, in which he here privately instructs him, ver. 1—21. II. John Baptist's discourse with his disciples concerning Christ, upon occasion of his coming into the neighbourhood where John was (ver. 22—36), in which he fairly and faithfully resigns all his honour and interest to him.

THERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it

cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you *of* heavenly things? 13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

We found, in the close of the foregoing chapter, that few were brought to Christ at Jerusalem; yet here was *one*, a considerable one. It is worth while to go a great way for the salvation though but of *one soul*. Observe,

I. Who this Nicodemus was. Not many mighty and noble are called; yet some are, and here was one. *Not many* of the *rulers, or of the Pharisees;* yet, 1. This was a *man of the Pharisees*, bred to learning, a scholar. Let it not be said that all Christ's followers are *unlearned and ignorant men*. The principles of the Pharisees, and the peculiarities of their sect, were directly contrary to the spirit of Christianity; yet there were some in whom even those high thoughts were cast down and brought into obedience to Christ. The grace of Christ is able to subdue the greatest opposition. 2. He was a *ruler of the Jews*, a member of the great sanhedrim, a senator, a privy-counsellor, a man of authority in Jerusalem. Bad as things were, there were some rulers *well inclined*, who yet could do little good because the stream was so strong against them; they were over-ruled by the majority, and yoked with those that were corrupt, so that the good which they wished to do they could not do; yet Nicodemus continued in his place, and did what he *could*, when he could not do what he *would*.

II. His solemn address to our Lord Jesus Christ, *v.* 2. See here,

1. When he came: *He came to Jesus by night*. Observe, (1.) He made a private and particular address to Christ, and did not think it enough to hear his public discourses. He resolved to talk with him by himself, where he might be free with him. Personal converse with skilful faithful ministers about the affairs of our souls would be of great use to us, Mal. ii. 7. (2.) He made this address *by night*, which may be considered, [1.] As an act of *prudence* and *discretion*. Christ was engaged all day in *public* work, and he would not interrupt him then, nor expect his attendance then, but observed *Christ's hour*, and waited on him when he was *at leisure*. Note, Private advantages to ourselves and our own families must give way to those that are public. The greater good must be preferred before the less. Christ had many enemies, and therefore Nicodemus came to him *incognito*, lest being known to the chief priests they should be the more enraged against Christ. [2.] As an act of *zeal* and *forwardness*. Nicodemus was a man of business, and could not spare time all day to make Christ a visit, and therefore he would rather take time from the diversions of the *evening*, or the rest of the *night*, than not converse with Christ. When others were sleeping, he was getting knowledge, as David by meditation, Ps. lxiii. 6, and cxix. 148. Probably it was the very next night after he saw Christ's miracles, and he would not neglect the first opportunity of pursuing his convictions. He knew not how soon Christ might leave the town, nor what might happen betwixt that and another feast, and therefore would lose no time. In the night his converse with Christ would be more free, and less liable to disturbance. These were *Noctes Christianæ—Christian nights*, much more instructive than the *Noctes Atticæ—Attic nights*. Or, [3.] As an act of *fear* and *cowardice*. He was afraid, or ashamed, to be *seen* with Christ, and therefore came *in the night*. When religion is out *of fashion*, there are many Nicodemites, especially among the rulers, who

have a better affection to Christ and his religion than they would be known to have. But observe, *First*, Though he came by night, Christ bade him welcome, accepted his integrity, and pardoned his infirmity; he considered his *temper*, which perhaps was *timorous*, and the *temptation* he was in from his place and office; and hereby taught his ministers to become all things to all men, and to encourage good beginnings, though weak. *Paul preached privately to those of reputation*, Gal. ii. 2. *Secondly*, Though now he came *by night*, yet afterwards, when there was occasion, he owned Christ *publicly*, *ch.* vii. 50; xix. 39. The grace which is at first but a grain of mustard-seed may grow to be a great tree.

2. What he said. He did not come to talk with Christ about politics and state-affairs (though he was a ruler), but about the concerns of his own soul and its salvation, and, without circumlocution, comes immediately to the business; he calls Christ *Rabbi*, which signifies a *great man;* see Isa. xix. 20. *He shall send them a Saviour, and a great one;* a *Saviour and a rabbi*, so the word is. There are hopes of those who have a respect for Christ, and think and speak honourably of him. He tells Christ how far *he had attained:* We *know that thou art a teacher*. Observe, (1.) His *assertion* concerning Christ: *Thou art a teacher come from God;* not educated nor ordained by men, as other teachers, but supported with divine inspiration and divine authority. He that was to be the sovereign Ruler came first to be a *teacher;* for he would rule with reason, not with rigour, by the power of truth, not of the sword. The world lay in ignorance and mistake; the Jewish teachers were corrupt, and caused them to err: *It is time for the Lord to work*. He came a *teacher from God*, from God as the *Father of mercies*, in pity to a dark deceived world; from God as the *Father of lights* and *fountain of truth*, all the light and truth upon which we may venture our souls. (2.) His *assurance* of it: *We know*, not only *I*, but *others;* so he took it for granted, the thing being so plain and self-evident. Perhaps he knew that there were divers of the Pharisees and rulers with whom he conversed that were under the same convictions, but had not the grace to own it. Or, we may suppose that he speaks in the plural number (*We know*) because he brought with him one or more of his friends and pupils, to receive instructions from Christ, knowing them to be of common concern. "Master," saith he, "we come with a desire to be taught, to be thy scholars, for we are fully satisfied thou art a divine teacher." (3.) The ground of this assurance: *No man can do those miracles that thou doest, except God be with him*. Here, [1.] We are assured of the truth of Christ's miracles, and that they were not counterfeit. Here was Nicodemus, a judicious, sensible, inquisitive man, one that had all the *reason* and *opportunity* imaginable to examine them, so fully satisfied that they were real miracles that he was wrought upon by them to go contrary to his interest, and to the stream of those of his own rank, who were prejudiced against Christ. [2.] We are directed what inference to draw from Christ's miracles: Therefore we are to receive him as a *teacher come from God*. His miracles were his credentials. The course of nature could not be altered but by the power of the God of nature, who, we are sure, is the God of truth and goodness, and would never set his seal to a lie or a cheat.

III. The discourse between Christ and Nicodemus hereupon, or, rather, the sermon Christ preached to him; the contents of it, and that perhaps an abstract of Christ's public preaching; see *v.* 11, 12. Four things our Saviour here discourses of:—

1. Concerning the *necessity and nature of regeneration* or the *new birth*, *v.* 3—8. Now we must consider this,

(1.) As *pertinently answered* to Nicodemus's address. Jesus *answered*, *v.* 3. This answer was either, [1.] A *rebuke* of what he saw *defective* in the address of Nicodemus. It was not enough for him to admire Christ's miracles, and acknowledge his mission, but he must be *born again*. It is plain that he expected the *kingdom of heaven*, the kingdom of the Messiah now shortly to appear. He is betimes aware of the dawning of that day; and, according to the common notion of the Jews, he expects it to appear in external pomp and power. He doubts not but this Jesus, who works these miracles, is either the Messiah or his prophet, and therefore makes his court to him, compliments him, and so hopes to secure a share to himself of the advantages of that kingdom. But Christ tells him that he can have no benefit by that *change of the state*, unless there be a *change of the spirit*, of the principles and dispositions, equivalent to a new birth. Nicodemus came *by night:* "But this will not do," saith Christ. His religion must be owned before men; so Dr. Hammond. Or, [2.] A *reply* to what he saw *designed* in his address. When Nicodemus owned Christ a *teacher come from God*, one entrusted with an extraordinary revelation from heaven, he plainly intimated a desire to know what this revelation was and a readiness to receive it; and Christ declares it.

(2.) As *positively* and *vehemently* asserted by our Lord Jesus: *Verily, verily, I say unto thee. I the Amen, the Amen, say it;* so it may be read: "I the faithful and true witness." The matter is settled irreversibly that *except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God*. "I say it to *thee*, though a Pharisee, though a master in Israel." Observe,

[1.] What it is that is required: to be *born again;* that is, *First*, We must *live a*

new life. Birth is the beginning of life; to be *born again* is to begin anew, as those that have hitherto lived either much amiss or to little purpose. We must not think to patch up the old building, but begin from the foundation. *Secondly,* We must *have a new nature,* new principles, new affections, new aims. We must be born ἄνωθεν, which signifies both *denuo—again,* and *desuper—from above.* 1. We must be born *anew;* so the word is taken, Gal. iv. 9, and *ab initio—from the beginning,* Luke i. 3. By our *first birth* we are corrupt, shapen in sin and iniquity; we must therefore undergo a second birth; our souls must be *fashioned* and *enlivened* anew. 2. We must be born *from above,* so the word is used by the evangelist, *ch.* iii. 31; xix. 11, and I take this to be especially intended here, not excluding the other; for to be born *from above* supposes being *born again.* But this new birth has its rise *from* heaven (*ch.* i. 13) and its tendency *to* heaven: it is to be born to a *divine* and *heavenly* life, a life of communion with God and the upper world, and, in order to this, it is to partake of a *divine nature* and bear the *image of the heavenly.*

[2.] The indispensable necessity of this: "Except *a man* (any one that partakes of the human nature, and consequently of its corruptions) *be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,* the kingdom of the Messiah begun in *grace* and perfected in *glory.*" Except we be *born from above,* we cannot *see* this. That is, *First,* We cannot *understand* the *nature* of it. Such is the nature of things pertaining to the kingdom of God (in which Nicodemus desired to be instructed) that the soul must be re-modelled and moulded, the natural man must become a spiritual man, before he is capable of receiving and understanding them, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *Secondly,* We cannot *receive the comfort* of it, cannot expect any benefit by Christ and his gospel, nor have any part or lot in the matter. Note, Regeneration is absolutely necessary to our happiness here and hereafter. Considering what we are by nature, how corrupt and sinful,—what *God* is, in whom alone we can be happy,—and *what heaven* is, to which the perfection of our happiness is reserved,—it will appear, in the nature of the thing, that we must be *born again,* because it is impossible that we should be *happy* if we be not *holy;* see 1 Cor. vi. 11, 12.

This great truth of the necessity of regeneration being thus solemnly laid down,

a. It is objected against by Nicodemus (*v.* 4): *How can a man be born when he is old,* old as I am; γέρων ὢν—*being an old man? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?* Herein appears, (*a.*) His weakness in knowledge; what Christ spoke spiritually he seems to have understood after a corporal and carnal manner, as if there were no other way of regenerating and new-moulding an immortal soul than by new-framing the body, and bringing that back to the *rock out of which it was hewn,* as if there was such a connection between the soul and the body that there could be no fashioning the *heart anew* but by forming the *bones anew.* Nicodemus, as others of the Jews, valued himself, no doubt, very much on his *first birth* and its dignities and privileges,—the *place* of it, the Holy Land, perhaps the holy city,—his *parentage,* such as that which Paul could have gloried in, Phil. iii. 5. And therefore it is a great surprise to him to hear of being *born again.* Could he be better bred and born than bred and born an Israelite, or by any other birth stand fairer for a place in the kingdom of the Messiah? Indeed they looked upon a proselyted Gentile to be as one *born again* or *born anew,* but could not imagine how a Jew, a Pharisee, could ever *better himself* by being *born again;* he therefore thinks, if he must be *born again,* it must be of *her* that *bore him first.* They that are proud of their *first birth* are hardly brought to a *new birth.* (*b.*) His willingness to be taught. He does not turn his back upon Christ because of his hard saying, but ingenuously acknowledges his ignorance, which implies a desire to be better informed; and so I take this, rather than that he had such gross notions of the new birth Christ spoke of: "Lord, make me to understand this, for it is a riddle to me; I am such a fool as to know no other way for a man to be born than of his mother." When we meet with that in the things of God which is *dark,* and *hard to be understood,* we must with humility and industry continue our attendance upon the means of knowledge, till God *shall reveal even that unto us.*

b. It is opened and further explained by our Lord Jesus, *v.* 5—8. From the objection he takes occasion,

(*a.*) To repeat and confirm what he had said (*v.* 5): "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee,* the very same that I said before." Note, The word of God is not yea and nay, but yea and amen; what he hath said he will abide by, whoever saith against it; nor will he retract any of his sayings for the ignorance and mistakes of men. Though Nicodemus understood not the mystery of regeneration, yet Christ asserts the necessity of it as positively as before. Note, It is folly to think of evading the obligation of evangelical precepts, by pleading that they are unintelligible, Rom. iii. 3, 4.

(*b.*) To expound and clear what he had said concerning regeneration; for the explication of which he further shows,

[*a.*] The *author* of this blessed change, and who it is that works it. To be born again is to be *born of the Spirit, v.* 5—8. The change is not wrought by any wisdom or power of our own, but by the power and influence of the blessed Spirit of grace. It is the *sanctification of the Spirit* (1 Pet. i. 2) and *renewing of the Holy Ghost,* Tit. iii. 5. The

word he works by is his inspiration, and the heart to be wrought on he has access to.

[*b.*] The *nature* of this change, and what that is which is wrought; it is *spirit, v.* 6. Those that are regenerated are made *spiritual,* and refined from the dross and dregs of sensuality. The dictates and interests of the rational and immortal soul have retrieved the dominion they ought to have over the flesh. The Pharisees placed their religion in external purity and external performances; and it would be a mighty change indeed with them, no less than a new birth, to become *spiritual.*

[*c.*] The *necessity* of this change. *First,* Christ here shows that it is necessary in the *nature of the thing,* for we are not fit to enter into the kingdom of God till we are born again: *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, v.* 6. Here is our malady, with the causes of it, which are such that it is plain there is no remedy but we must be *born again.* 1. We are here told *what we are:* We are *flesh,* not only *corporeal* but *corrupt,* Gen. vi. 3. The soul is still a spiritual substance, but so wedded to the flesh, so captivated by the will of the flesh, so in love with the delights of the flesh, so employed in making provision for the flesh, that it is justly called *flesh;* it is carnal. And what communion can there be between God, who is a *spirit,* and a soul in this condition? 2. How we *came to be so;* by being *born of the flesh.* It is a corruption that is bred *in the bone* with us, and therefore we cannot have a new nature, but we must be *born again.* The corrupt nature, which is *flesh,* takes rise from our *first birth;* and therefore the new nature, which is *spirit,* must take rise from a second birth. Nicodemus spoke of entering again into his mother's womb, and being born; but, if he could do so, to what purpose? If he were born of his mother a hundred times, that would not mend the matter, for still that *which is born of the flesh is flesh;* a clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean. He must seek for another original, must be born of the Spirit, or he cannot become spiritual. The case is, in short, this: though man is made to consist of body and soul, yet his spiritual part had then so much the dominion over his corporeal part that he was denominated a *living soul* (Gen. ii. 7), but by indulging the appetite of the flesh, in eating forbidden fruit, he prostituted the just dominion of the soul to the tyranny of sensual lust, and became no longer a *living soul,* but flesh: *Dust thou art.* The living soul became dead and inactive; thus in *the day* he sinned he *surely died,* and so he became *earthly.* In this degenerate state, he begat a son *in his own likeness;* he transmitted the human nature, which had been entirely deposited in his hands, thus corrupted and depraved; and in the same plight it is still propagated. Corruption and sin are woven into our nature; we are *shapen in iniquity,* which makes it necessary that the nature be changed. It is not enough to put on a new coat or a new face, but we must put on the *new man,* we must be new creatures. *Secondly,* Christ makes it further necessary, by his own word: *Marvel not that I said unto thee, You must be born again, v.* 7. 1. Christ hath said it, and as he himself never did, nor ever will, unsay it, so all the world cannot gainsay it, that we *must be born* again. He who is the great *Lawgiver,* whose will is a law,—he who is the great Mediator of the new covenant, and has full power to settle the terms of our reconciliation to God and happiness in him,—he who is the great Physician of souls, knows their case, and what is necessary to their cure,—he hath said, *You must be born again.* "I said unto *thee* that which all are concerned in, You must, you all, one as well as another, *you must be born again:* not only the common people, but the rulers, the *masters in Israel.*" 2. We are not to *marvel* at it; for when we consider the holiness of the God with whom we have to do, the great design of our redemption, the depravity of our nature, and the constitution of the happiness set before us, we shall not think it strange that so much stress is laid upon this as the one thing needful, that *we must be born again.*

[*d.*] This change is illustrated by two comparisons. *First,* The regenerating work of the Spirit is compared to *water, v.* 5. To be born again is to be *born of water* and of the Spirit, that is, of the Spirit working like water, as (Matt. iii. 11) *with the Holy Ghost and with fire* means with the Holy Ghost *as* with fire. 1. That which is primarily intended here is to show that the Spirit, in sanctifying a soul, (1.) *Cleanses* and purifies it as water, takes away its filth, by which it was unfit for the kingdom of God. It is the *washing of regeneration,* Tit. iii. 5. *You are washed,* 1 Cor. vi. 11. See Ezek. xxxvi 25. (2.) Cools and refreshes it, as water does the hunted hart and the weary traveller. The Spirit is compared to water, *ch.* vii. 38, 39; Isa. xliv. 3. In the first creation, the fruits of heaven were *born of water* (Gen. i. 20), in allusion to which, perhaps, they that are born from above are said to be born of water. 2. It is probable that Christ had an eye to the ordinance of baptism, which John had used and he himself had begun to use, "You must be born again of the Spirit," which regeneration by the Spirit should be signified by washing with water, as the visible sign of that spiritual grace: not that all they, and they only, that are baptized, are saved; but without that new birth which is wrought by the Spirit, and signified by baptism, none shall be looked upon as the *protected privileged* subjects of the *kingdom of heaven.* The Jews cannot partake of the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom, they have so long looked for, unless they quit all expectations

of being justified by the works of the law, and submit to the *baptism of repentance*, the great gospel duty, *for the remission of sins*, the great gospel privilege. *Secondly*, It is compared to *wind: The wind bloweth where it listeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit*, *v.* 8. The same word (πνεῦμα) signifies both the wind and the Spirit. The Spirit came upon the apostles in a *rushing mighty wind* (Acts ii. 2), his *strong* influences on the hearts of sinners are compared to the *breathing of the wind* (Ezek. xxxvii. 9), and his *sweet* influences on the souls of saints to the north and south wind, Cant. iv. 16. This comparison is here used to show, 1. That the Spirit, in regeneration, works *arbitrarily*, and as a free agent. The *wind bloweth where it listeth* for us, and does not attend our order, nor is subject to our command. God *directs* it; it *fulfils his word*, Ps. cxlviii. 8. The Spirit dispenses his influences where, and when, on whom, and in what measure and degree, he pleases, *dividing to every man severally as he will*, 1 Cor. xii. 11. 2. That he works *powerfully*, and with evident effects: *Thou hearest the sound thereof;* though its causes are hidden, its effects are manifest. When the soul is brought to mourn for sin, to groan under the burden of corruption, to breathe after Christ, to cry *Abba—Father*, then we *hear the sound of the Spirit*, we find he is at work, as Acts ix. 11, *Behold he prayeth.* 3. That he works *mysteriously*, and in secret hidden ways: *Thou canst not tell whence it comes, nor whither it goes.* How it gathers and how it spends its strength is a riddle to us; so the manner and methods of the Spirit's working are a mystery. *Which way went the Spirit?* 1 Kings xxii. 24. See Eccl. xi. 5, and compare it with Ps. cxxxix. 14.

2. Here is a discourse concerning the *certainty and sublimity of gospel truths*, which Christ takes occasion for from the weakness of Nicodemus. Here is,

(1.) The objection which Nicodemus still made (*v.* 9): *How can these things be?* Christ's explication of the doctrine of the necessity of regeneration, it should seem, made it never the clearer to him. The corruption of nature which makes it *necessary*, and the way of the Spirit which makes it *practicable*, are as much mysteries to him as the thing itself; though he had in general owned Christ a divine teacher, yet he was unwilling to receive his teachings when they did not agree with the notions he had imbibed. Thus many profess to admit the doctrine of Christ in general, and yet will neither believe the truths of Christianity nor submit to the laws of it further than *they please.* Christ shall be their teacher, provided they may choose their lesson. Now here, [1.] Nicodemus owns himself ignorant of Christ's meaning, after all: "*How can these things be?* They are things I do not understand, my capacity will not reach them." Thus the *things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man.* He is not only estranged from them, and therefore they are dark to him, but prejudiced against them, and therefore they are foolishness to him. [2.] Because this doctrine was *unintelligible* to him (so he was pleased to make it), he questions the truth of it; as if, because it was a *paradox* to him, it was a *chimera* in itself. Many have such an opinion of their own capacity as to think that that cannot be *proved* which they cannot *believe;* by *wisdom* they *knew not* Christ.

(2.) The reproof which Christ gave him for his dulness and ignorance: "*Art thou a master in Israel*, Διδάσκαλος—*a teacher*, a tutor, one who sits in Moses's chair, and yet not only unacquainted with the doctrine of regeneration, but incapable of understanding it?" This word is a reproof, [1.] To those who undertake to teach others and yet are ignorant and unskilful in the word of righteousness themselves. [2.] To those that spend their time in learning and teaching notions and ceremonies in religion, niceties and criticisms in the scripture, and neglect that which is practical and tends to reform the heart and life. Two words in the reproof are very emphatic:—*First*, The place where his lot was cast: in *Israel*, where there was such great plenty of the means of knowledge, where divine revelation was. He might have learned this out of the Old Testament. *Secondly*, The things he was thus ignorant in: *these* things, these *necessary* things, these *great* things, these *divine* things; had he never read Ps. l. 5, 10; Ezek. xviii. 31; xxxvi. 25, 26?

(3.) Christ's discourse, hereupon, of the certainty and sublimity of gospel truths (*v.* 11—13), to show the folly of those who make strange of these things, and to recommend them to our search. Observe here,

[1.] That the truths Christ taught were very *certain* and what we may venture upon (*v.* 11): *We speak that we do know. We;* whom does he mean besides himself? Some understand it of those that bore witness to him and with him on earth, the prophets and John Baptist; they *spoke* what they *knew*, and had seen, and were themselves abundantly satisfied in: divine revelation carries its own proof along with it. Others of those that bore witness from heaven, the Father and the Holy Ghost; the Father was with him, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; therefore he speaks in the plural number, as *ch.* xiv. 23: *We will come unto him.* Observe, *First*, That the truths of Christ are of undoubted certainty. We have all the reason in the world to be assured that the sayings of Christ are *faithful sayings*, and such as we may venture our souls upon; for he is not only a *credible* witness, who would not go about to deceive us, but a *competent* witness, who could not himself be deceived: *We testify that we have seen.* He spoke not upon hearsay, but upon the clearest evidence, and

therefore with the greatest assurance. What he spoke of God, of the invisible world, of heaven and hell, of the divine will concerning us, and the counsels of peace, was what he *knew*, and *had seen*, for he was *by him as one brought up with him*, Prov. viii. 30. Whatever Christ spoke, he spoke *of his own knowledge*. *Secondly*, That the unbelief of sinners is greatly aggravated by the infallible certainty of the truths of Christ. The things are thus sure, thus clear; and yet *you receive not our witness*. Multitudes to be *unbelievers* of that which yet (so cogent are the motives of credibility) they cannot *disbelieve!*

[2.] The truths Christ taught, though communicated in language and expressions borrowed from common and earthly things, yet in their own nature were most sublime and heavenly; this is intimated, *v.* 12: "*If I have told them earthly things*, that is, have told them the great things of God in similitudes taken from earthly things, to make them the more easy and intelligible, as that of the *new birth* and the *wind*,—if I have thus accommodated myself to your capacities, and lisped to you in your own language, and cannot make you to understand my doctrine,—*what would you do* if I should accommodate myself to the nature of the things, and speak with the tongue of angels, that language which mortals cannot utter? If such *familiar expressions* be stumbling-blocks, what would *abstract ideas* be, and spiritual things painted *proper?*" Now we may learn hence, *First*, To admire the height and depth of the doctrine of Christ; it is a great mystery of godliness. The things of the gospel are *heavenly* things, out of the road of the enquiries of human reason, and much more out of the reach of its discoveries. *Secondly*, To acknowledge with thankfulness the condescension of Christ, that he is pleased to suit the manner of the gospel revelation to our capacities, *to speak to us as to children*. He considers our *frame*, that we are *of* the earth, and our *place*, that we are *on* the earth, and therefore speaks to us earthly things, and makes things sensible the vehicle of things spiritual, to make them the more easy and familiar to us. Thus he has done both in parables and in sacraments. *Thirdly*, To lament the corruption of our nature, and our great unaptness to receive and entertain the truths of Christ. Earthly things are despised because they are *vulgar*, and heavenly things because they are *abstruse;* and so, whatever method is taken, still some fault or other is found with it (Matt. xi. 17), but Wisdom is, and will be, *justified of her children*, notwithstanding.

[3.] Our Lord Jesus, and he alone, was fit to reveal to us a doctrine thus certain, thus sublime: *No man hath ascended up into heaven but he, v.* 13.

First, None but Christ was able to reveal to us the will of God for our salvation. Nicodemus addressed Christ as a prophet; but he must know that he is greater than all the Old-Testament prophets, for none of them *had ascended into heaven*. They wrote by divine inspiration, and not of their own knowledge; see *ch.* i. 18. Moses ascended into the mount, but not into heaven. No man hath attained to the certain knowledge of God and heavenly things as Christ has; see Matt. xi. 27. It is not for us to send to heaven for instructions; we must wait to receive what instructions Heaven will send to us; see Prov. xxx. 4; Deut. xxx. 12.

Secondly, Jesus Christ is able, and fit, and every way qualified, to reveal the will of God to us; for it is *he that came down from heaven* and *is in heaven*. He had said (*v.* 12), *How shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?* Now here, 1. He gives them an instance of those *heavenly things* which he could tell them of, when he tells them of one that *came down from heaven*, and yet is the *Son of man;* is the *Son of man*, and yet is *in heaven*. If the regeneration of the *soul of man* is such a mystery, what then is the incarnation of the *Son of God?* These are divine and heavenly things indeed. We have here an intimation of Christ's two distinct natures in one person: his divine nature, in which he *came down from heaven;* his human nature, in which he is the *Son of man;* and that union of those two, in that while he is the Son of man yet he is *in heaven*. 2. He gives them a proof of his ability to speak to them *heavenly things*, and to lead them into the arcana of the kingdom of heaven, by telling them, (1.) That *he came down from heaven*. The intercourse settled between God and man began *above;* the first motion towards it did not arise from this earth, but *came down from heaven*. We love him, and send to him, because he first loved us, and sent to us. Now this intimates, [1.] Christ's divine nature. He that came down from heaven is certainly more than a mere man; he is the *Lord from heaven*, 1 Cor. xv. 47. [2.] His intimate acquaintance with the divine counsels; for, coming from the court of heaven, he had been from eternity conversant with them. [3.] The *manifestation of God*. Under the Old Testament God's favours to his people are expressed by his *hearing from heaven* (2 Chron. vii. 14), *looking from heaven* (Ps. lxxx. 14), *speaking from heaven* (Neh. ix. 13), sending from heaven, Ps. lvii. 3. But the New Testament shows us God *coming down* from heaven, to teach and save us. That he thus *descended* is an admirable *mystery*, for the Godhead cannot change places, nor did he bring his body from heaven; but that he thus *condescended* for our redemption is a more admirable *mercy;* herein he commended his love. (2.) That *he is the Son of man, that* Son of man spoken of by Daniel (vii. 13), by which the Jews always understand to be meant the Messiah. Christ, in calling himself the *Son of man*, shows that he is the *second Adam*, for the first Adam was the *father of man*. And of all the Old-Testament

titles of the Messiah he chose to make use of *this*, because it was most expressive of his *humility*, and most agreeable to his present state of *humiliation*. (3.) That he *is in heaven*. Now at this time, when he is talking with Nicodemus on earth, yet, as God, he is *in heaven*. The *Son of man*, as such, was not in heaven till his ascension; but he that was the Son of man was now, by his divine nature, every where present, and particularly in heaven. Thus the Lord of glory, as such, could not be crucified, nor could God, as such, shed his blood; yet that person who was the Lord of glory was crucified (1 Cor. ii. 8), and God purchased the church with *his own blood*, Acts xx. 28. So close is the union of the two natures in one person that there is a communication of properties. He doth not say ὁς ἐστι, but ὁ ὢν τῶ οὐρανῶ. God is the ὁ ὢν—*he that is*, and heaven is the habitation of *his holiness*.

3. Christ here discourses of the *great design of his own coming into the world, and the happiness of those that believe in him*, *v.* 14—18. Here we have the very marrow and quintessence of the whole gospel, that *faithful saying* (1 Tim. i. 15), that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the children of men from death, and recover them to life. Now sinners are *dead men* upon a twofold account:—(1.) As one that is mortally wounded, or sick of an incurable disease, is said to be a *dead man*, for he is dying; and so Christ came to save us, by *healing* us, as the brazen serpent healed the Israelites, *v.* 14, 15. (2.) As one that is justly condemned to die for an unpardonable crime is a *dead man*, he is *dead in law;* and, in reference to this part of our danger, Christ came to save as a prince or judge, publishing an act of indemnity, or general pardon, under certain provisos; this saving here is opposed to condemning, *v.* 16—18.

[1.] Jesus Christ came to save us by *healing* us, as the children of Israel that were stung with fiery serpents were cured and *lived* by looking up to the brazen serpent; we have the story of it, Num. xxi. 6—9. It was the *last* miracle that passed through the hand of Moses before his death. Now in this type of Christ we may observe,

First, The *deadly* and *destructive* nature of *sin*, which is implied here. The guilt of sin is like the *pain* of the biting of a fiery serpent; the power of corruption is like the *venom* diffused thereby. The devil is the old serpent, subtle at first (Gen. iii. 1), but ever since *fiery*, and his temptations *fiery darts*, his assaults terrifying, his victories destroying. Ask awakened consciences, ask damned sinners, and they will tell you, how charming soever the allurements of sin are, *at the last it bites like a serpent*, Prov. xxiii. 30—32. God's wrath against us for sin is as those fiery serpents which God sent among the people, to punish them for their murmurings. The curses of the law are as fiery serpents, so are all the tokens of divine wrath.

Secondly, The powerful remedy provided against this fatal malady. The case of poor sinners is deplorable; but is it desperate? Thanks be to God, it is not; there is balm in Gilead. The *Son of man is lifted up*, as the *serpent of brass* was by Moses, which cured the stung Israelites. 1. It was a *serpent of brass* that cured them. Brass is *bright;* we read of Christ's feet *shining like brass*, Rev. i. 15. It is *durable;* Christ is the same. It was made in the shape of a *fiery serpent*, and yet had no poison, no sting, fitly representing Christ, who was *made sin for us* and yet knew no sin; was *made in the likeness of sinful flesh* and yet not sinful; as harmless as a serpent of brass. The serpent was a cursed creature; Christ was made a *curse*. That which cured them reminded them of their plague; so in Christ sin is set before us most fiery and formidable. 2. It was lifted up upon a pole, and so *must* the Son of man be lifted up; thus it *behoved him*, Luke xxiv. 26, 46. No remedy now. Christ is lifted up, (1.) In his *crucifixion*. He was lifted up upon the cross. His death is called his being *lifted up*, *ch.* xii. 32, 33. He was lifted up as a spectacle, as a mark, lifted up between heaven and earth, as if he had been unworthy of either and abandoned by both. (2.) In his *exaltation*. He was lifted up to the Father's right hand, to give repentance and remission; he was lifted up to the cross, to be further lifted up to the crown. (3.) In the *publishing* and *preaching* of his everlasting gospel, Rev. xiv. 6. The serpent was lifted up that all the thousands of Israel might see it. Christ in the gospel is exhibited to us, evidently set forth; Christ is *lifted up* as an *ensign*, Isa. xi. 10. 3. It was lifted up by Moses. Christ was made under the law of Moses, and Moses testified of him. 4. Being thus lifted up, it was appointed for the cure of those that were bitten by fiery serpents. He that sent the plague provided the remedy. None could redeem and save us but he whose justice had condemned us. It was God himself that *found the ransom*, and the efficacy of it depends upon his appointment. The *fiery serpents* were sent to punish them for their *tempting Christ* (so the apostle saith, 1 Cor. x. 9), and yet they were healed by virtue derived from him. He whom we have offended is *our peace*.

Thirdly, The way of *applying* this remedy, and that is by *believing*, which plainly alludes to the Israelites' *looking up* to the brazen serpent, in order to their being healed by it. If any stung Israelite was either so little sensible of his pain and peril, or had so little confidence in the word of Moses as not to look up to the brazen serpent, justly did he die of his wound; but every one that *looked up to it* did well, Num. xxi. 9. If any so far slight either their disease by sin or the method of cure by Christ as not to embrace Christ upon his own terms, their blood is upon their own head. He hath said, *Look*,

and be saved (Isa. xlv. 22), look and live. We must take a complacency in and give consent to the methods which Infinite Wisdom has taken of saving a guilty world, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, as the great sacrifice and intercessor.

Fourthly, The great encouragements given us by faith to look up to him. 1. It was for this end that he was *lifted up*, that his followers might be saved; and he will pursue his end. 2. The offer that is made of salvation by him is general, that *whosoever believes* in him, without exception, might have benefit by him. 3. The salvation offered is complete. (1.) They *shall not perish*, shall not die of their wounds; though they may be pained and ill frightened, iniquity shall not be their ruin. But that is not all. (2.) They shall *have eternal life*. They shall not only not die of their wounds in the wilderness, but they shall reach Canaan (which they were then just ready to enter into); they shall enjoy the promised rest.

[2.] Jesus Christ came to save us by *pardoning us*, that we might not die by the sentence of the law, *v.* 16, 17. Here is *gospel* indeed, good *news*, the best that ever came from heaven to earth. Here is *much*, here is *all* in a little, the word of reconciliation in miniature.

First, Here is God's *love*, in *giving his Son for the world* (*v.* 16), where we have three things:—1. The great *gospel mystery* revealed: *God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son.* The love of God the Father is the original of our regeneration by the Spirit and our reconciliation by the lifting up of the Son. Note, (1.) Jesus Christ is the *only-begotten Son of God.* This magnifies his love in giving him for us, in giving him to us; now know we that he loves us, when he has given his *only-begotten Son for us*, which expresses not only his dignity in himself, but his dearness to his Father; he was *always his delight.* (2.) In order to the redemption and salvation of man, it pleased God to *give his only-begotten Son.* He not only sent him into the world with full and ample power to negociate a peace between heaven and earth, but he *gave him*, that is, he gave him up to suffer and die for us, as the great propitiation or expiatory sacrifice. It comes in here as a reason why he *must be lifted up*; for so it was determined and designed by the Father, who gave him for this purpose, and *prepared him a body* in order to it. His enemies could not have *taken him* if his Father had not *given* him. Though he was not yet crucified, yet in the determinate counsel of God he was *given* up, Acts ii. 23. Nay, further, God has *given him*, that is, he has made an offer of him, to all, and given him to all true believers, to all the intents and purposes of the new covenant. He has given him to be our *prophet*, a *witness to the people*, the high priest of our profession, to be our peace, to be head of the church and head over all things to the church, to be to us all we need. (3.) Herein God has commended his *love to the world:* God so *loved the world*, so really, so richly. Now his creatures shall see that he loves them, and wishes them well. He so loved the world of fallen man as he did not love that of fallen angels; see Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 10. Behold, and wonder, that the *great God* should love such a *worthless* world! That the *holy God* should love such a *wicked* world with a love of good will, when he could not look upon it with any complacency This was a *time of love indeed*, Ezek. xvi. 6, 8. The Jews vainly conceited that the Messiah should be sent only in love to *their nation*, and to advance them upon the ruins of their neighbours; but Christ tells them that he came in love to the *whole world*, Gentiles as well as Jews, 1 John ii. 2. Though many of the world of mankind perish, yet God's giving his only-begotten Son was an instance of his love to the whole world, because through him there is a *general offer* of life and salvation made to all. It is love to the revolted rebellious province to issue out a proclamation of pardon and indemnity to all that will come in, plead it upon their knees, and return to their allegiance. So *far God loved the* apostate lapsed *world* that he sent his Son with this fair proposal, that *whosoever believes in him*, one or other, *shall not perish. Salvation* has been *of the Jews*, but now Christ is *known as salvation to the ends of the earth*, a *common salvation.* 2. Here is the great *gospel duty*, and that is to *believe in Jesus Christ* (whom God has thus given, given *for us*, given *to us*), to accept the gift, and answer the intention of the giver. We must yield an unfeigned assent and consent to the record God hath given in his word concerning his Son. God having given him to us to be our prophet, priest, and king, we must give up ourselves to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him. 3. Here is the great gospel benefit: *That whosoever believes in Christ shall not perish.* This he had said before, and here repeats it. It is the unspeakable happiness of all true believers, for which they are eternally indebted to Christ, (1.) That they are saved from the miseries of hell, delivered from *going down to the pit*; they *shall not perish.* God has taken away their sin, they shall not die; a pardon is purchased, and so the attainder is reversed. (2.) They are entitled to the joys of heaven: they shall *have everlasting life.* The convicted traitor is not only pardoned, but preferred, and made a favourite, and treated as one whom the King of kings *delights to honour*. *Out of prison he comes to reign*, Eccl. iv. 14. If believers, then children; and, if *children, then heirs.*

Secondly, Here is God's design in sending his Son into the world: it was *that the world through him might be saved.* He came into the world with salvation in *his eye*, with salvation *in his hand.* Therefore the aforementioned offer of life and salvation is sin-

cere, and shall be made good to all that by faith accept it (*v.* 17): *God sent his Son into the world*, this guilty, rebellious, apostate world; sent him as his agent or ambassador, not as sometimes he had sent angels into the world as visitants, but as resident. Ever since man sinned, he has dreaded the approach and appearance of any special messenger from heaven, as being conscious of guilt and looking for judgment: *We shall surely die, for we have seen God.* If therefore the Son of God himself come, we are concerned to enquire on what errand he comes: *Is it peace?* Or, as they asked Samuel trembling, *Comest thou peaceably?* And this scripture returns the answer, *Peaceably.* 1. He did not come to *condemn the world.* We had reason enough to expect that he should, for it is a guilty world; it is *convicted*, and what cause can be shown why judgment should not be given, and execution awarded, according to law? That *one blood* of which all *nations* of men are made (Acts xvii. 26) is not only *tainted* with an hereditary *disease*, like Gehazi's leprosy, but it is *tainted* with an hereditary *guilt*, like that of the Amalekites, with whom God had war *from generation to generation;* and justly may such a world as this be *condemned;* and if God would have sent to condemn it he had angels at command, to pour out the vials of his wrath, a cherub with a flaming sword ready to do execution. *If the Lord had been pleased to kill us*, he would not have sent his Son amongst us. He came with full powers indeed to *execute judgment* (*ch.* v. 22, 27), but did not begin with a judgment of condemnation, did not proceed upon the outlawry, nor take advantage against us for the breach of the *covenant of innocency*, but put us upon a new trial before a *throne of grace.* 2. He came *that the world through him might be saved*, that a door of salvation might be opened to the world, and whoever would might enter in by it. God was in Christ *reconciling the world to himself*, and so *saving* it. An act of indemnity is passed and published, through Christ a remedial law made, and the world of mankind dealt with, not according to the rigours of the first covenant, but according to the riches of the second; *that the world* through him might be saved, for it could never be saved but *through him; there is not salvation in any other.* This is good news to a convinced conscience, healing to broken bones and bleeding wounds, that Christ, our judge, came not to *condemn*, but to *save.*

[3.] From all this is inferred the happiness of true believers: *He that believeth on him is not condemned, v.* 18. Though he has been a sinner, a great sinner, and *stands convicted (habes confitentem reum—by his own confession)*, yet, upon his believing, process is stayed, judgment is arrested, and he is *not condemned.* This denotes more than a reprieve; he *is not condemned*, that is, he is acquitted; he *stands upon his deliverance* (as we say), and if he be not condemned he is discharged; *οὐ κρίνεται—he is not judged*, not dealt with in strict justice, according to the desert of his sins. He is *accused*, and he cannot plead *not guilty* to the indictment, but he can plead *in bar*, can plead a *noli prosequi* upon the indictment, as blessed Paul does, *Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died.* He is *afflicted*, chastened of God, persecuted by the world; but he is not *condemned.* The cross perhaps lies heavy upon him, but he is saved from the curse: condemned *by the world*, it may be, but not *condemned with the world*, Rom. viii. 1; 1 Cor. xi. 32.

4. Christ, in the close, discourses concerning the *deplorable condition of those that persist in unbelief and wilful ignorance, v.* 18—21.

(1.) Read here the doom of those that will not *believe in Christ:* they *are condemned already.* Observe, [1.] How great the *sin* of unbelievers is; it is aggravated from the dignity of the person they slight; they *believe not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God*, who is infinitely *true*, and deserves to be believed, *infinitely good*, and deserves to be embraced. God sent one to save us that was *dearest* to himself; and shall not he be *dearest to us?* Shall we not believe on his name who has a name above every name? [2.] How great the *misery* of unbelievers is: they are *condemned already;* which bespeaks, *First*, A *certain* condemnation. They are as sure to be condemned in the judgment of the great day as if they were condemned already. *Secondly*, A *present* condemnation. The curse has already taken hold of them; the wrath of God now fastens upon them. They are condemned already, for their own hearts condemn them. *Thirdly*, A condemnation *grounded upon their former guilt:* He is condemned *already*, for he lies open to the law for all his sins; the obligation of the law is in full force, power, and virtue, against him, because he is not by faith interested in the gospel defeasance; *he is condemned already, because he has not believed.* Unbelief may truly be called *the great damning sin*, because it leaves us under the guilt of all our other sins; it is a sin against the *remedy*, against our *appeal.*

(2.) Read also the doom of those that would not so much as *know him, v.* 19. Many *inquisitive* people had knowledge of Christ and his doctrine and miracles, but they were prejudiced against him, and would not believe in him, while the generality were sottishly careless and stupid, and would not *know* him. And *this is the condemnation*, the sin that ruined them, *that light is come into the world, and they loved darkness rather.* Now here observe, [1.] That the gospel is light, and, when the gospel came, *light came into the world.* Light is *self-evidencing*, so

is the gospel; it proves its own divine origin. Light is *discovering*, and *truly the light is sweet*, and rejoices the heart. It is a light shining in a dark place, and a dark place indeed the world would be without it. It is *come into all the world* (Col. i. 6), and not confined to one corner of it, as the Old-Testament light was. [2.] It is the unspeakable folly of the most of men that they loved darkness rather than light, rather than *this* light. The Jews loved the dark shadows of their law, and the instructions of their *blind guides*, rather than the doctrine of Christ. The Gentiles loved their superstitious services of *an unknown God*, whom they *ignorantly worshipped*, rather than the *reasonable service* which the gospel enjoins. Sinners that were wedded to their lusts loved their ignorance and mistakes, which supported them in their sins, rather than the truths of Christ, which would have parted them from their sins. Man's apostasy began in an affectation of forbidden knowledge, but is kept up by an affectation of forbidden ignorance. Wretched man is in love with his sickness, in love with his slavery, and will not be made *free*, will not be *made whole*. [3.] The true reason why men love darkness rather than light is *because their deeds are evil*. They love darkness because they think it is an excuse for their evil deeds, and they hate the light because it robs them of the good opinion they had of themselves, by showing them their sinfulness and misery. Their case is sad, and, because they are resolved that they will not *mend* it, they are resolved that they will not *see it*. [4.] Wilful ignorance is so far from excusing sin that it will be found, at the great day, to aggravate the condemnation: *This is the condemnation*, this is what ruins souls, that they shut their eyes against the light, and will not so much as admit a parley with Christ and his gospel; they set God so much at defiance that they desire not the knowledge of his ways, Job xxi. 14. We must account in the judgment, not only for the knowledge we *had*, and *used not*, but for the knowledge we *might have had*, and *would not*; not only for the knowledge we *sinned against*, but for the knowledge we *sinned away*. For the further illustration of this he shows (*v.* 20, 21) that according as men's hearts and lives are good or bad, so they stand affected to the light Christ has brought into the world.

First, It is not strange if those that do evil, and resolve to persist in it, hate the light of Christ's gospel; for it is a common observation that *every one that doeth evil hateth the light*, *v.* 20. Evil-doers seek concealment, out of a sense of shame and fear of punishment; see Job xxiv. 13, &c. Sinful works are *works of darkness*; sin from the first affected concealment, Job xxxi. 33. The *light shakes* the wicked, Job xxxviii. 12, 13. Thus the gospel is a terror to the wicked world: *They come not to this light*, but keep as far off it as they can, *lest their deeds should be reproved*. Note, 1. The light of the gospel is sent into the world to *reprove the evil deeds* of sinners; to make them manifest (Eph. v. 13), to *show* people *their transgressions*, to show that to be sin which was not thought to be so, and to show them the evil of their transgressions, *that sin by the* new *commandment* might appear *exceeding sinful*. The gospel has its convictions, to make way for its consolations. 2. It is for this reason that evil-doers *hate the light* of the gospel. There were those who *had done evil* and were sorry for it, who bade this light welcome, as the *publicans and harlots*. But he that *does evil*, that does it and resolves to go on in it, *hateth the light*, cannot bear to be told of his faults. All that opposition which the gospel of Christ has met with in the world comes from the *wicked heart*, influenced by the *wicked one*. Christ is hated because sin is loved. 3. They who do not *come to the light* thereby evidence a secret *hatred* of the light. If they had not an antipathy to *saving knowledge*, they would not sit down so contentedly in *damning ignorance*.

Secondly, On the other hand, upright hearts, that approve themselves to God in their integrity, bid this light welcome (*v.* 21): *He that doeth truth cometh to the light*. It seems, then, that though the gospel had many enemies it had some friends. It is a common observation that *truth seeks no corners*. Those who mean and act honestly dread not a scrutiny, but desire it rather. Now this is applicable to the gospel light; as it *convinces* and *terrifies* evil-doers, so it *confirms* and *comforts* those that walk in their integrity. Observe here, 1. The character of a *good man*. (1.) He is one that *doeth truth*; that is, he acts truly and sincerely in all he does. Though sometimes he comes short of *doing good*, the good he would do, yet he *doeth truth*, he aims honestly; he has his infirmities, but holds fast his integrity; as Gaius, that *did faithfully* (3 John 5), as Paul (2 Cor. i. 12), as Nathanael (*ch.* i. 47), as Asa, 1 Kings xv. 14. (2.) He is one that *cometh to the light*. He is ready to receive and entertain divine revelation as far as it appears to him to be so, what uneasiness soever it may create him. He that *doeth truth* is willing to know the *truth* by himself, and to *have his deeds made manifest*. A good man is much employed in trying himself, and is desirous that God would try him, Ps. xxvi. 2. He is solicitous to *know* what the will of God is, and resolves to *do* it, though ever so contrary to his own will and interest. 2. Here is the character of a *good work*: it is *wrought in God*, in union with him by a covenanting faith, and in communion with him by devout affections. Our works are *then* good, and will bear the test, when the will of God is

the rule of them and the glory of God the end of them; when they are done in his strength, and for his sake, to him, and not to men; and if, by the light of the gospel, it be manifest to us that our works are thus wrought, *then shall we have rejoicing,* Gal. vi. 4; 2 Cor. i. 12.

Thus far we have Christ's discourse with *Nicodemus;* it is probable that much more passed between them, and it had a good effect, for we find (*ch.* xix. 39) that Nicodemus, though he was puzzled at first, yet afterwards became a faithful disciple of Christ.

22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 23 And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. 24 For John was not yet cast into prison. 25 Then there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. 26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him. 27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease. 31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. 32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. 33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. 34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him.* 35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. 36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

In these verses we have,

I. Christ's removal into the land of Judea (*v.* 22), and there he tarried with his disciples. Observe, 1. Our Lord Jesus, after he entered upon his public work, travelled much, and removed often, as the patriarchs in their sojournings. As it was a good part of his humiliation that he had no certain dwelling-place, but was, as Paul, *in journeyings often,* so it was an instance of his unwearied industry, in the work for which he came into the world, that he went about in prosecution of it; many a weary step he took to do good to souls. The *Sun of righteousness* took a large circuit to diffuse his light and heat, Ps. xix. 6. 2. He was not wont to stay long at Jerusalem. Though he went frequently thither, yet he soon returned into the country; as here. *After these things,* after he had had this discourse with Nicodemus, he came into the land of Judea; not so much for *greater privacy* (though mean and obscure places best suited the humble Jesus in his humble state) as for *greater usefulness.* His preaching and miracles, perhaps, made *most noise* at Jerusalem, the fountain-head of news, but did *least good* there, where the most considerable men of the Jewish church had so much the ascendant. 3. When he came into the land of Judea his *disciples came with him;* for these were *they that continued with him in his temptations.* Many that flocked to him at Jerusalem could not follow his motions into the country, they had no business there; but his disciples attended him. If the ark remove, it is better to *remove and go after it* (as those did, Josh. iii. 3) than sit still without it, though it be in Jerusalem itself. 4. There he *tarried with them,* διέτριβε—*He conversed* with them, *discoursed* with them. He did not retire into the country for his ease and pleasure, but for more free conversation with his disciples and followers. See Cant. vii. 11, 12. Note, Those that are ready to *go with Christ* shall find him as ready to *stay with them.* It is supposed that he now staid five or six months in this country. 5. There *he baptized;* he admitted disciples, such as believed in him, and had more honesty and courage than those had at Jerusalem, *ch.* ii. 24. John began to baptize in the land of Judea (Matt. iii. 1), therefore Christ began there, for John had said, *There comes one after me.* He himself *baptized* not, with his own hand, but his disciples by his orders and directions, as appears, *ch.* iv. 2. But his disciples' baptizing was his baptizing. Holy ordinances are Christ's, though administered by weak men.

II. John's continuance in his work, as long

as his opportunities lasted, *v.* 23, 24. Here we are told,

1. That *John was baptizing.* Christ's baptism was, for substance, the same with John's, for John bore witness to Christ, and therefore they did not at all clash or interfere with one another. But, (1.) Christ began the work of preaching and baptizing before *John laid it down,* that he might be ready to receive John's disciples when he should be taken off, and so the wheels might be kept going. It is a comfort to useful men, when they are going off the stage, to see those rising up who are likely to fill up their place. (2.) John continued the work of preaching and baptizing though Christ had *taken it up;* for he would still, according to the *measure given to him,* advance the interests of God's kingdom. There was still work for John to do, for Christ was not yet *generally known,* nor were the minds of people *thoroughly prepared* for him by repentance. From heaven John had received his *command,* and he would go on in his work till he thence received his *countermand,* and would have his dismission from the same hand that gave him his commission. He does not *come in* to Christ, lest what had formerly passed should look like a combination between them; but *he goes on* with his work, till Providence lays him aside. The greater gifts of some do not *render* the labours of others, that come short of them, *needless* and *useless;* there is work enough for all hands. They are sullen that will sit down and do nothing when they see themselves out-shone. Though we have but one talent, we must account for that: and, when we see ourselves *going off,* must yet *go on* to the last.

2. That he baptized in Enon near Salim, places we find nowhere else mentioned, and therefore the learned are altogether at a loss where to find them. Wherever it was, it seems that John removed from *place to place;* he did not think that there was any virtue in Jordan, because Jesus was baptized there, which should engage him to stay there, but as he saw cause he removed to other waters. Ministers must follow their opportunities. He chose a place where there was much water, ὕδατα πολλὰ—*many waters,* that is, many *streams* of water; so that wherever he met with any that were willing to submit to his baptism water was at hand to baptize them with, *shallow* perhaps, as is usual where there are *many* brooks, but such as would serve his purpose. And in that country plenty of water was a valuable thing.

3. That thither people *came to him* and *were baptized.* Though they did not come in such vast crowds as they did when he first appeared, yet now he was not without encouragement, but there were still those that attended and owned him. Some refer this both to John and to Jesus: *They came and were baptized;* that is, some came to John, and were baptized by him, some to Jesus, and were baptized by him, and, as their baptism was one, so were their hearts.

4. It is noted (*v.* 24) that *John was not yet cast into prison,* to clear the order of the story, and to show that these passages are to come in before Matt. iv. 12. John never desisted from his work as long as he had his liberty; nay, he seems to have been the more industrious, because he foresaw his time was short; he was not *yet cast into prison,* but he expected it ere long, *ch.* ix. 4.

III. A contest between *John's disciples and the Jews about purifying, v.* 25. See how the gospel of Christ came not to *send peace upon earth,* but *division.* Observe, 1. Who were the disputants: *some of John's disciples, and the Jews* who had not submitted to his baptism of repentance. Penitents and impenitents divide this sinful world. In this contest, it should seem, John's disciples were the *aggressors,* and gave the *challenge;* and it is a sign that they were novices, who had more zeal than discretion. The truths of God have often suffered by the rashness of those that have undertaken to defend them before they were able to do it. 2. What was the matter in dispute: *about purifying,* about *religious washing.* (1.) We may suppose that John's disciples cried up his baptism, his purifying, as *instar omnium—superior to all others,* and gave the preference to that as perfecting and superseding all the purifications of the Jews, and they were in the right; but *young* converts are too apt to boast of their attainments, whereas he that finds the *treasure* should *hide it* till he is sure that he has it, and not talk of it too much at first. (2.) No doubt the Jews with as much assurance applauded the *purifyings* that were in use among them, both those that were instituted by the law of Moses and those that were imposed by the tradition of the elders; for the former they had a divine warrant, and for the latter the usage of the church. Now it is very likely that the Jews in this dispute, when they could not *deny* the excellent nature and design of John's baptism, raised an objection against it from Christ's baptism, which gave occasion for the complaint that follows here (*v.* 26): "Here is John baptizing in one place," say they, "and Jesus at the same time baptizing in another place; and therefore John's baptism, which his disciples so much applaud, is either," [1.] "*Dangerous,* and of *ill consequence* to the peace of the church and state, for you see it opens a door to endless parties. Now that John has begun, we shall have every little teacher set up for a baptist presently. Or," [2.] "At the best it is *defective* and *imperfect.* If John's baptism, which you cry up thus, have any good in it, yonder the baptism of Jesus goes beyond it, so that for your parts you are shaded already by a greater light, and your baptism is soon gone out of request." Thus objections are made against the gospel from the advancement and improvement of

gospel light, as if childhood and manhood were contrary to each other, and the superstructure were against the foundation. There was no reason to object Christ's baptism against John's, for they consisted very well together.

IV. A complaint which John's disciples made to their master concerning Christ and his baptizing, *v.* 26. They, being *nonplussed* by the fore-mentioned objection, and probably *ruffled* and put into a heat by it, come to their master, and tell him, "*Rabbi, he that was with thee*, and was baptized of thee, is now set up for himself; he *baptizeth, and all men come to him;* and wilt thou suffer it?" Their itch for disputing occasioned this. It is common for men, when they find themselves run aground in the heat of disputation, to fall foul upon those that do them no harm. If these disciples of John had not undertaken to dispute about *purifying*, before they understood the *doctrine of baptism*, they might have answered the objection without being put into a passion. In their complaint, they speak respectfully to their own master, *Rabbi;* but speak very slightly of our Saviour, though they do not name him. 1. They suggest that Christ's setting up a baptism of his own was a piece of presumption, very unaccountable; as if John, having first set up this rite of baptizing, must have the monopoly of it, and, as it were, a patent for the invention: "*He that was with thee beyond Jordan*, as a disciple of thine, *behold*, and wonder, *the same*, the very same, *baptizes*, and takes thy work out of thy hand." Thus the voluntary condescensions of the Lord Jesus, as that of his being baptized by John, are often unjustly and very unkindly turned to his reproach. 2. They suggest that it was a piece of ingratitude to John. He *to whom thou barest witness* baptizes; as if Jesus owed all his reputation to the honourable character John gave of him, and yet had very unworthily improved it to the prejudice of John. But Christ needed not John's testimony, *ch.* v. 36. He reflected more honour upon John than he received from him, yet thus it is incident to us to think that others are more indebted to us than really they are. And besides, Christ's baptism was not in the least an *impeachment*, but indeed the greatest *improvement*, of John's baptism, which was but to lead the way to Christ's. John was *just* to Christ, in bearing witness to him; and Christ's answering his testimony did rather enrich than impoverish John's ministry. 3. They conclude that it would be a total eclipse to John's baptism: "*All men come to him;* they that used to follow with us now flock after him, it is therefore time for us to look about us." It was not indeed strange that *all men came to him.* As far as Christ is *manifested* he will be *magnified*; but why should John's disciples grieve at this? Note, Aiming at the monopoly of honour and respect has been in all ages the bane of the church, and the shame of its members and ministers; as also a vieing of interests, and a jealousy of rivalship and competition. We mistake if we think that the excelling gifts and graces, and labours and usefulness, of one, are a diminution and disparagement to another that has obtained mercy to be faithful; for the Spirit is a free agent, *dispensing to every one severally as he will.* Paul rejoiced in the usefulness even of those that *opposed him*, Phil. i. 18. We must leave it to God to choose, employ, and honour his own instruments as he pleaseth, and not covet to be *placed alone.*

V. Here is John's answer to this complaint which his disciples made, *v.* 27, &c. His disciples expected that he would have resented this matter as they did; but Christ's *manifestation to Israel* was no *surprise* to John, but what he looked for; it was no *disturbance* to him, but what he wished for. He therefore checked the complaint, as Moses, *Enviest thou for my sake?* and took this occasion to confirm the testimonies he had formerly borne to Christ as superior to him, cheerfully consigning and turning over to him all the interest he had in Israel. In this discourse here, the first minister of the gospel (for so John was) is an excellent pattern to all ministers to *humble* themselves and to *exalt* the Lord Jesus.

1. John here *abases himself in comparison with Christ*, *v.* 27—30. The more others magnify us, the more we must humble ourselves, and fortify ourselves against the temptation of flattery and applause, and the jealousy of our friends for our honour, by remembering our place, and what we are, 1 Cor. iii. 5.

(1.) *John acquiesces* in the divine disposal, and satisfies himself with that (*v.* 27): *A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven*, whence *every good gift* comes (James i. 17), a general truth very applicable in this case. Different employments are according to the direction of divine Providence, different endowments according to the distribution of the divine grace. *No man can take* any true *honour* to himself, Heb. v. 4. We have as necessary and constant a dependence upon the grace of God in all the motions and actions of the spiritual life as we have upon the providence of God in all the motions and actions of the natural life: now this comes in here as a reason, [1.] Why we should not *envy* those that have a larger share of gifts than we have, or move in a larger sphere of usefulness. John reminds his disciples that Jesus would not have thus excelled him *except he had received it from heaven*, for, as *man* and *Mediator*, he *received gifts;* and, if God gave him *the Spirit without measure* (*v.* 34), shall they grudge at it? The same reason will hold as to others. If God is *pleased* to give to others more ability and success than to us, shall we be displeased at it, and reflect upon him as unjust, unwise, and partial? See Matt. xx. 15. [2.] Why we should not be *discontented*, though we be inferior to

others in gifts and usefulness, and be eclipsed by their excellencies. John was ready to own that it was the gift, the free gift, of heaven, that made him a preacher, a prophet, a baptist: it was God that gave him the interest he had in the love and esteem of the people; and, if now his interest decline, God's will be done! He that *gives* may *take.* What we *receive* from heaven we must take as it is *given.* Now John never received a commission for a standing *perpetual* office, but only for a *temporary* one, which must soon expire; and therefore, when he has fulfilled his ministry, he can contentedly see it go out of date. Some give quite another sense of these words: John had taken pains with his disciples, to teach them the reference which his baptism had to Christ, who should come after him, and yet be preferred before him, and do that for them which he could not do; and yet, after all, they dote upon John, and grudge this preference of Christ above him: Well, saith John, I see *a man can receive* (that is, perceive) *nothing, except it be given him from heaven.* The labour of ministers is all lost labour, unless the grace of God make it effectual. Men do not understand that which is made most *plain,* nor believe that which is made most *evident,* unless it be given them from heaven to understand and believe it.

(2) John appeals to the testimony he had formerly given concerning Christ (*v.* 28): You can bear me witness that I said, again and again, *I am not the Christ, but I am sent before him.* See how steady and constant John was in his testimony to Christ, and not as a *reed shaken with the wind;* neither the frowns of the chief priests, nor the flatteries of his own disciples, could make him change his note. Now this serves here, [1.] As a *conviction* to his disciples of the unreasonableness of their complaint. They had spoken of the witness which their master bore to Jesus (*v.* 26): "Now," saith John, "do you not remember what the testimony was that I did bear? Call that to mind, and you will see your own cavil answered. Did I not say, *I am not the Christ?* Why then do you set me up as a rival with him that is? Did I not say, *I am sent before him?* Why then does it seem strange to you that I should stand by and give way to him?" [2.] It is a *comfort* to himself that he had never *given* his disciples *any occasion* thus to set him up in competition with Christ; but, on the contrary, had particularly *cautioned* them against this mistake, though he might have made a hand of it for himself. It is a satisfaction to faithful ministers when they have done what they could in their places to prevent any extravagances that their people ran into. John had not only not encouraged them to hope that he was the Messiah, but had plainly told them the contrary, which was now a satisfaction to him. It is a common excuse for those who have undue honour paid them, *Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur—If the people will be deceived, let them;* but that is an ill maxim for those to go by whose business it is to *undeceive* people. *The lip of truth shall be established.*

(3.) John professes the great satisfaction he had in the advancement of Christ and his interest. He was so far from *regretting* it, as his disciples did, that he *rejoiced* in it. This he expresses (*v.* 29) by an elegant similitude. [1.] He compares our Saviour to the *bridegroom: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom.* Do *all men come to him?* It is well, whither else should they go? Has he got the throne in men's affections? Who else should have it? It is his right; to whom should the bride be brought but to the bridegroom?" Christ was prophesied of in the Old Testament as a bridegroom, Ps. xlv. *The Word was made flesh,* that the disparity of nature might not be a *bar to the match.* Provision is made for the purifying of the church, that the defilement of sin might be no bar. Christ espouses his church to himself; he *has* the bride, for he has her love, he has her promise; *the church is subject to Christ.* As far as particular souls are devoted to him in faith and love, so far the bridegroom has the bride. [2.] He compares himself to the *friend of the bridegroom,* who attends upon him, to do him honour and service, assists him in prosecuting the match, speaks a good word for him, uses his interest on his behalf, rejoices when the match goes on, and most of all when the point is gained, and he *has the bride.* All that John had done in preaching and baptizing was to introduce him; and, now that he was come, he had what he wished for: *The friend of the bridegroom stands, and hears him;* stands expecting him, and waiting for him; *rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice,* because he is come to the marriage after he had been long expected. Note, *First,* Faithful ministers are friends of the bridegroom, to recommend him to the affections and choice of the children of men; to bring letters and messages from him, for he courts by proxy; and herein they must be faithful to him. *Secondly,* The friends of the bridegroom must *stand, and hear the bridegroom's voice;* must receive instructions from him, and attend his orders; must desire to have proofs of Christ speaking in them, and with them (2 Cor. xiii. 3); that is the *bridegroom's voice. Thirdly,* The espousing of souls to Jesus Christ, in faith and love, is the fulfilling of the joy of every good minister. If the day of Christ's espousals be the day of the gladness of his heart (Cant. iii. 11), it cannot but be of theirs too who love him and wish well to his honour and kingdom. Surely they have *no greater joy.*

(4.) He owns it highly fit and necessary that the reputation and interest of Christ should be advanced, and his own diminished

(*v.* 30): *He must increase, but I must decrease.* If they grieve at the growing greatness of the Lord Jesus, they will have more and more occasion to grieve, as those have that indulge themselves in envy and emulation. John speaks of Christ's increase and his own decrease, not only as *necessary* and *unavoidable*, which could not be *helped* and therefore must be *borne*, but as highly *just* and *agreeable*, and affording him entire satisfaction. [1.] He was *well pleased* to see the kingdom of Christ getting ground: "*He must increase.* You think he has gained a great deal, but it is nothing to what he will gain." Note, The kingdom of Christ is, and will be, a growing kingdom, like the light of the morning, like the grain of mustard-seed. [2.] He was not at all *displeased* that the effect of this was the diminishing of his own interest: *I must decrease.* Created excellencies are under this law, they *must decrease. I have seen an end of all perfection.* Note, *First*, The shining forth of the glory of Christ eclipses the lustre of all other glory. The glory that stands in *competition* with Christ, that of the world and the flesh, decreases and loses ground in the soul as the knowledge and love of Christ increase and get ground; but it is here spoken of that which is *subservient* to him. As the light of the morning increases, that of the morning star decreases. *Secondly*, If our diminution or abasement may but in the least contribute to the advancement of Christ's name, we must cheerfully submit to it, and be content to be *any thing*, to be *nothing*, so that Christ may be *all.*

2. John Baptist here *advances* Christ, and instructs his disciples concerning him, that, instead of grieving that so many come to him, they might come to him themselves.

(1.) He instructs them concerning the *dignity of Christ's person* (*v.* 31): *He that cometh from above*, that *cometh from heaven, is above all.* Here, [1.] He supposes his divine origin, that he came *from above*, from *heaven*, which bespeaks not only his divine extraction, but his divine nature. He had a being before his conception, a heavenly being. None but he that came from heaven was fit to show us the will of heaven, or the way to heaven. When God would save man, he *sent from above.* [2.] Hence he infers his sovereign authority: he is *above all*, above all things and all persons, *God over all, blessed for evermore.* It is daring presumption to dispute precedency with him. When we come to speak of the honours of the Lord Jesus, we find they transcend all conception and expression, and we can say but this, *He is above all.* It was said of John Baptist, *There is not a greater among them that are born of women.* But the descent of Christ from heaven put such a dignity upon him as he was not divested of by his being made flesh; still he was *above all.* This he further illustrates by the meanness of those who stood in competition with him: *He that is of the earth, is earthly*, ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῆς γῆς, ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐστι—*He that is of the earth is of the earth;* he that has his origin of the earth has his food out of the earth, has his converse with earthly things, and his concern is for them. Note, *First*, Man has his rise out of the earth; not only Adam at first, but we also still are *formed out of the clay*, Job xxxiii. 6. Look to the rock whence we were hewn. *Secondly*, Man's constitution is therefore *earthly;* not only his body frail and mortal, but his soul corrupt and carnal, and its bent and bias strong towards earthly things. The prophets and apostles were of the same mould with other men; they were but *earthen vessels*, though they had a rich treasure lodged in them; and shall these be set up as rivals with Christ? *Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth;* but let them not cope with him that *came from heaven.*

(2.) Concerning the *excellency and certainty of his doctrine.* His disciples were displeased that Christ's preaching was admired, and attended upon, more than his; but he tells them that there was reason enough for it. For,

[1.] He, for his part, *spoke of the earth*, and so do all those that are *of the earth.* The prophets were men and spoke like men; *of themselves* they could not speak but *of the earth*, 2 Cor. iii. 5. The preaching of the prophets and of John was but low and flat compared with Christ's preaching; as heaven is high above the earth, so were his thoughts above theirs. By them God spoke *on earth*, but in Christ he speaketh *from heaven.*

[2.] But he that cometh from heaven is not only in his person, but in his doctrine, above all the prophets that ever lived on earth; none teacheth like him. The doctrine of Christ is here recommended to us,

First, As infallibly *sure* and *certain*, and to be entertained accordingly (*v.* 32): *What he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth.* See here, 1. Christ's divine knowledge; he testified nothing but *what he had seen and heard*, what he was perfectly apprized of and thoroughly acquainted with. What he discovered of the divine nature and of the invisible world was what he had *seen;* what he revealed of the mind of God was what he had *heard* immediately from him, and not at second hand. The prophets testified what was made known to them in dreams and visions by the mediation of angels, but not what they had seen and heard. John was the crier's *voice*, that said, "*Make room for the witness*, and *keep silence* while the charge is given," but then leaves it to the witness to give in his testimony himself, and the judge to give the charge himself. The gospel of Christ is not a doubtful opinion, like an hypothesis or new notion in philosophy, which every one is at liberty to believe or not; but it is a revelation of the mind of God, which is of *eternal truth* in itself, and of *infinite*

concern to us. 2. His divine grace and goodness: that which he had *seen* and *heard* he was pleased to make known to us, because he knew it nearly concerned us. What Paul had seen and heard in the third heavens he could not testify (2 Cor. xii. 4), but Christ knew how to utter what he had *seen* and *heard.* Christ's preaching is here called his *testifying*, to denote, (1.) The *convincing evidence* of it; it was not *reported* as news by hearsay, but it was *testified* as evidence given in court, with great caution and assurance. (2.) The affectionate earnestness of the delivery of it: it was testified with concern and importunity, as Acts xviii. 5.

From the *certainty* of Christ's doctrine, John takes occasion, [1.] To lament the infidelity of the most of men: though he testifies what is infallibly true, yet *no man receiveth* his testimony, that is, very few, next to none, none in comparison with those that refuse it. They receive it not, they will not hear it, they do not heed it, or give credit to it. This he speaks of not only as a matter of *wonder*, that such a testimony should not be received (Who hath believed our report? How stupid and foolish are the greatest part of mankind, what enemies to themselves!) but as matter of *grief;* John's disciples grieved that *all men came to Christ* (*v.* 26); they thought his followers too many. But John grieves that *no man came to him;* he thought them too few. Note, The unbelief of sinners is the grief of saints. It was for this that St. Paul had *great heaviness*, Rom. ix. 2. [2.] He takes occasion to commend the faith of the chosen remnant (*v.* 33): *He that hath received his testimony* (and some such there were, though very few) hath *set to his seal that God is true.* God is true, though we do not *set our seal to it;* let God be true, and every man a liar; his truth needs not our faith to support it, but by faith we do ourselves the honour and justice to subscribe to his truth, and hereby God reckons himself honoured. God's promises are all *yea and amen;* by faith we put our *amen* to them, as Rev. xxii. 20. Observe, He that receives the testimony of Christ subscribes not only to the truth of Christ, but to the truth of *God*, for his name is the *Word of God;* the commandments of God and the testimony of Christ are put together, Rev. xii. 17. By believing in Christ we set to our seal, *First*, That God is true to all the promises which he has made *concerning Christ*, that which he spoke by the mouth of *all his holy prophets;* what he *swore to our fathers* is all accomplished, and not one iota or tittle of it fallen to the ground, Luke i. 70, &c. Acts xiii. 32, 33. *Secondly*, That he is true to all the promises he has made *in Christ;* we venture our souls upon God's veracity, being satisfied that he is *true;* we are willing to deal with him *upon trust*, and to quit all in this world for a happiness in reversion and out of sight. By this we greatly honour God's faithfulness. Whom we *give credit* to we *give honour* to.

Secondly, It is recommended to us as a *divine* doctrine; not his own, but *his that sent* him (*v.* 34): *For he whom God hath sent speaketh the word of God*, which he was sent to speak, and enabled to speak; *for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.* The prophets were as messengers that brought letters from heaven; but Christ came under the character of an *ambassador*, and treats with us as such; for, 1. He spoke the *words of God*, and nothing he said savoured of human infirmity; both substance and language were divine. He proved himself *sent of God* (*ch.* iii. 2), and therefore his words are to be received as the words of God. By this rule we may try the spirits: those that speak *as the oracles of God*, and prophesy *according to the proportion of faith*, are to be received as *sent of God.* 2. He spoke as no other prophet did; for *God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him.* None can speak the *words of God* without the *Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. The Old-Testament prophets had the Spirit, and in different degrees, 2 Kings ii. 9, 10. But, whereas God gave them the Spirit by *measure* (1 Cor. xii. 4), he gave him to Christ *without measure;* all fulness dwelt in him, the fulness of the Godhead, an immeasurable fulness. The Spirit was not in Christ as in a vessel, but as in a fountain, as in a bottomless ocean. "The prophets that had the Spirit in a limited manner, only with respect to some particular revelation, sometimes spoke of *themselves;* but he that had the Spirit always residing in him, without stint, always spoke *the words of God.*" So Dr. Whitby.

(3.) Concerning *the power and authority he is invested with*, which gives him the preeminence above all others, and a more excellent name than they.

[1.] He is the *beloved Son of the Father* (*v.* 35): *The Father loveth the Son.* The prophets were faithful as servants, but Christ as a Son; they were employed as servants, but Christ *beloved* as a son, always *his delight*, Prov. viii. 30. The Father was well pleased in him; not only he *did* love him, but he *doth* love him; he continued his love to him even in his estate of humiliation, loved him never the less for his poverty and sufferings.

[2.] He is *Lord of all.* The Father, as an evidence of his love for him, *hath given all things into his hand.* Love is generous. The Father took such a complacency and had such a confidence in him that he constituted him the great *feoffee in trust* for mankind. Having given *him the Spirit without measure*, he gave him *all things;* for he was hereby qualified to be master and manager of all. Note, It is the honour of Christ, and the unspeakable comfort of all Christians, that the Father hath *given all things* into the hands of the Mediator. *First*, All *power;* so it is explained, Matt. xxviii. 18. All the works of creation being put under his feet, all the

affairs of redemption are put into his hand; he is Lord of all. Angels are his servants; devils are his captives. He has *power over all flesh*, the *heathen* given *him for his inheritance.* The kingdom of providence is committed to his administration. He has power to settle the terms of the covenant of peace as the great *plenipotentiary*, to govern his church as the great *lawgiver*, to dispense divine favours as the great *almoner*, and to call all to account as the great *Judge.* Both the golden sceptre and the iron rod are given into his hand. *Secondly*, All *grace* is given into his hand as the channel of conveyance; *all things*, all those good things which God intended to give to the children of men; *eternal life*, and all its preliminaries. We are unworthy that the Father should give those things *into our hands*, for we have made ourselves the *children of his wrath;* he hath therefore appointed the *Son of his love* to be trustee for us, and the things he intended for us he gives *into his hands*, who is worthy, and has merited both honours for himself and favours for us. They are given *into his hands*, by him to be given into ours. This is a great encouragement to faith, that the riches of the new covenant are deposited in so sure, so kind, so good a hand, the hand of him that purchased them for us, and us for himself, who is able to keep all that which both God and believers have agreed to *commit to him.*

[3.] He is the object of that faith which is made the great condition of eternal happiness, and herein he has the pre-eminence above all others: *He that believeth on the Son, hath life, v.* 36. We have here the application of what he had said concerning Christ and his doctrine; and it is the *conclusion of the whole matter.* If God has put this honour upon the Son, we must by faith give honour to him. As God offers and conveys good things to us by the *testimony* of Jesus Christ, whose word is the vehicle of divine favours, so we receive and partake of those favours by *believing* the testimony, and entertaining that word as *true* and *good;* this way of *receiving* fitly answers that way of *giving.* We have here the sum of that gospel which is to be preached to every creature, Mark xvi. 16. Here is,

First, The blessed state of all true Christians: *He that believes on the Son hath everlasting life.* Note, 1. It is the character of every true Christian that he believes on *the Son of God;* not only *believes him*, that what he saith is true, but believes *on him*, consents to him, and confides in him. The benefit of true Christianity is no less than *everlasting life;* this is what Christ came to purchase for us and confer upon us; it can be no less than the happiness of an immortal soul *in* an immortal God. 2. True believers, even now, *have* everlasting life; not only they shall have it hereafter, but they have it now. For, (1.) They *have* very good security for it. The deed by which it passeth is sealed and delivered to them, and so they *have* it; it is put into the hands of their guardian for them, and so they have it, though the use be not yet transferred into possession. They have the Son of God, and in him *they have life;* and the Spirit of God, the earnest of this life. (2.) They have the comfortable *foretastes* of it, in present communion with God and the tokens of his love. Grace is glory begun.

Secondly, The wretched and miserable condition of unbelievers: *He that believeth not the Son* is undone, ὁ ἀπειθῶν. The word includes both *incredulity* and *disobedience.* An unbeliever is one that gives not credit to the doctrine of Christ, nor is in subjection to the government of Christ. Now those that will neither be *taught* nor *ruled* by Christ, 1. They *cannot be happy* in this world, nor that to come: *He shall not see life*, that life which Christ came to bestow. He shall not enjoy it, he shall not have any comfortable *prospect* of it, shall never come within ken of it, except to aggravate his loss of it. 2. They *cannot but be miserable: The wrath of God abides upon* an unbeliever. He is not only under the *wrath of God*, which is as surely *the soul's death* as his favour is *its life*, but it *abides upon him.* All the wrath he has made himself liable to by the violation of the law, if not removed by the grace of the gospel, is bound upon him. God's wrath for his daily actual transgressions lights and lies upon him. Old scores lie undischarged, and new ones are added: something is done every day to fill the measure, and nothing to empty it. Thus the wrath of God *abides*, for it is *treasured up against the day of wrath.*

CHAP. IV.

It was, more than any thing else, the glory of the land of Israel, that it was Emmanuel's land (Isa. viii. 8), not only the place of his birth, but the scene of his preaching and miracles. This land in our Saviour's time was divided into three parts: Judea in the south, Galilee in the north, and Samaria lying between them. Now, in this chapter, we have Christ in each of these three parts of that land. I. Departing out of Judea, ver. 1—3. II. Passing through Samaria, which, though a visit in transitu, here takes up most room. 1. His coming into Samaria, ver. 4—6. 2. His discourse with the Samaritan woman at a well, ver. 7—26. 3. The notice which the woman gave of him to the city, ver. 27—30. 4. Christ's talk with his disciples in the mean time, ver. 31—38. 5. The good effect of this among the Samaritans, ver. 39—42. III. We find him residing for some time in Galilee (ver. 43—46), and his curing a nobleman's son there, that was at death's door, ver. 46—54.

WHEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disples,) 3 He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee.

We read of Christ's coming into Judea (*ch.* iii. 22), after he had kept the feast at Jerusalem; and now he left Judea four months before harvest, as is said here (*v.* 35); so that it is computed that he staid in Judea about six months, to build upon the foundation John had laid there. We have no particular account of his sermons and miracles there, only in general, *v.* 1.

I. That he *made disciples;* he prevailed with many to embrace his doctrine, and to follow him as a teacher come from God. His ministry was successful, notwithstanding the opposition it met with (Ps. cx. 2, 3); μαθητὰς ποιεῖ—it signifies the same with μαθητεύω—*to disciple.* Compare Gen. xii. 5. *The souls which they had gotten,* which they had *made* (so the word is), which they had *made proselytes.* Note, It is Christ's prerogative to *make disciples,* first to bring them to his foot, and then to form and fashion them to his will. *Fit, non nascitur, Christianus—The Christian is made such, not born such.* Tertullian.

II. That he *baptized* those whom he *made disciples,* admitted them by *washing them with water;* not himself, but by the ministry of his disciples, *v.* 2. 1. Because he would put a difference between his baptism and that of John, who baptized all himself; for he baptized as a servant, Christ as a master. 2. He would apply himself more to preaching work, which was the more excellent, 1 Cor. i. 17. 3. He would put honour upon his disciples, by empowering and employing them to do it; and so train them up to further services. 4. If he had baptized some himself, they would have been apt to value themselves upon that, and despise others, which he would prevent, as Paul, 1 Cor. i. 13, 14. 5. He would reserve himself for the honour of baptizing with the Holy Ghost, Acts i. 5. 6. He would teach us that the efficacy of the sacraments depends not on any virtue in the hand that administers them, as also that what is done by his ministers, according to his direction, he owns as done by himself.

III. That he made and baptized *more disciples than John;* not only more than John did at this time, but more than he had done at any time. Christ's converse was more winning than John's. His miracles were convincing, and the cures he wrought *gratis* very inviting.

IV. That the Pharisees were informed of this; they heard what multitudes he baptized, for they had, from his first appearing, a jealous eye upon him, and wanted not spies to give them notice concerning him. Observe, 1. When the Pharisees thought they had got rid of John (for he was by this time imprisoned), and were pleasing themselves with that, Jesus appears, who was a greater vexation to them than ever John had been. The witnesses will rise again. 2. That which grieved them was that Christ made so many disciples. The success of the gospel exasperates its enemies, and it is a good sign that it is getting ground when the powers of darkness are enraged against it.

V. That our Lord Jesus knew very well what informations were given in against him to the Pharisees. It is probable the informers were willing to have their names concealed, and the Pharisees loth to have their designs known; but none can dig so deep as to *hide their counsels from the Lord* (Isa. xxix. 15), and Christ is here called *the Lord.* He knew what was told the Pharisees, and how much, it is likely, it exceeded the truth; for it is not likely that Jesus had yet baptized *more than John;* but so the thing was represented, to make him appear the more formidable; see 2 Kings vi. 12.

VI. That hereupon our Lord Jesus *left Judea* and *departed again* to go to Galilee.

1. He *left Judea,* because he was likely to be persecuted there even to the death; such was the rage of the Pharisees against him, and such their impious policy to devour the man-child in his infancy. To escape their designs, Christ quitted the country, and went where what he did would be less provoking than just under their eye. For, (1.) His hour was not yet come (*ch.* vii. 30), the time fixed in the counsels of God, and the Old-Testament prophecies, for Messiah's being cut off. He had not finished his testimony, and therefore would not surrender or expose himself. (2.) The disciples he had gathered in Judea were not able to bear hardships, and therefore he would not expose them. (3.) Hereby he gave an example to his own rule: *When they persecute you in one city, flee to another.* We are not called to suffer, while we may avoid it without sin; and therefore, though we may not, for our own preservation, change our religion, yet we may change our place. Christ secured himself, not by a miracle, but in a way *common to men,* for the direction and encouragement of his suffering people.

2. He departed into Galilee, because he had work to do there, and many friends and fewer enemies. He went to Galilee now, (1.) Because John's ministry had now *made way* for him there; for Galilee, which was under Herod's jurisdiction, was the last scene of John's baptism. (2.) Because John's imprisonment had now *made room* for him there. That light being now put under a bushel, the minds of people would not be divided between him and Christ. Thus both the liberties and restraints of good ministers are for the furtherance of the gospel, Phil. i. 12. But to what purpose does he go into Galilee for safety? Herod, the persecutor of John, will never be the protector of Jesus. Chemnitius here notes, *Pii in hâc vitâ quos fugiant habent; ad quos vero fugiant ut in tuto sint non habent, nisi ad te, Deus, qui solus refugium nostrum es—The pious have those, in this life, to whom they can fly; but they have none to fly to, who can afford them refuge, except thee, O God.*

4 And he must needs go through
Samaria. 5 Then cometh he to a
city of Samaria, which is called Sychar,
near to the parcel of ground that
Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6
Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus,
therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was

about the sixth hour. 7 There cometh
a woman of Samaria to draw water:
Jesus saith unto her, Give me to
drink. 8 (For his disciples were gone
away unto the city to buy meat.) 9
Then saith the woman of Samaria
unto him, How is it that thou, being
a Jew, askest drink of me, which am
a woman of Samaria? for the Jews
have no dealings with the Samaritans.
10 Jesus answered and said unto her,
If thou knewest the gift of God, and
who it is that saith to thee, Give
me to drink; thou wouldest have
asked of him, and he would have given
thee living water. 11 The woman
saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing
to draw with, and the well is deep:
from whence then hast thou that living
water? 12 Art thou greater than
our father Jacob, which gave us the
well, and drank thereof himself, and
his children, and his cattle? 13 Jesus
answered and said unto her, Whoso-
ever drinketh of this water shall thirst
again: 14 But whosoever drinketh of
the water that I shall give him shall
never thirst; but the water that I shall
give him shall be in him a well of
water springing up into everlasting
life. 15 The woman saith unto him,
Sir, give me this water, that I thirst
not, neither come hither to draw. 16
Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy
husband, and come hither. 17 The
woman answered and said, I have no
husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou
hast well said, I have no husband:
18 For thou hast had five husbands;
and he whom thou now hast is not
thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.
19 The woman saith unto him, Sir,
I perceive that thou art a prophet.
20 Our fathers worshipped in this
mountain; and ye say, that in Jeru-
salem is the place where men ought
to worship. 21 Jesus saith unto her,
Woman, believe me, the hour cometh,
when ye shall neither in this mountain,
nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the
Father. 22 Ye worship ye know not
what: we know what we worship: for
salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the
hour cometh, and now is, when the
true worshippers shall worship the
Father in spirit and in truth: for the
Father seeketh such to worship him.
24 God *is* a Spirit: and they that
worship him must worship *him* in
spirit and in truth. 25 The woman
saith unto him, I know that Messias
cometh, which is called Christ: when
he is come, he will tell us all things.
26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak
unto thee am *he*.

We have here an account of the good Christ did in Samaria, when he *passed through* that country in his way to Galilee. The Samaritans, both in *blood* and *religion*, were *mongrel Jews*, the posterity of those colonies which the king of Assyria planted there after the captivity of the ten tribes, with whom the poor of the land that were left behind, and many other Jews afterwards, incorporated themselves. They worshipped the God of Israel only, to whom they erected a temple on mount Gerizim, in competition with that at Jerusalem. There was great enmity between them and the Jews; the Samaritans would not admit Christ, when they saw he was going to Jerusalem (Luke ix. 53); the Jews thought they could not give him a worse name than to say, *He is a Samaritan*. When the Jews were in prosperity, the Samaritans claimed kindred to them (Ezra iv. 2), but, when the Jews were in distress, they were Medes and Persians; see *Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xi. *cap.* 8, *lib.* xii. *cap.* 7. Now observe,

I. Christ's coming into Samaria. He charged his disciples not to *enter into any city of the Samaritans* (Matt. x. 5), that is, not to preach the gospel, or work miracles; nor did he here preach publicly, or work any miracle, his eye being to *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. What kindness he here did them was *accidental;* it was only a *crumb* of the children's bread that casually *fell from the master's table*.

1. His *road* from Judea to Galilee lay through the *country* of Samaria (*v.* 4): *He must needs go through Samaria*. There was no other way, unless he would have fetched a compass on the other side *Jordan*, a great way about. The wicked and profane are at present so intermixed with God's Israel that, unless we will go *out of the world*, we cannot avoid *going through* the company of such, 1 Cor. v. 10. We have therefore need of the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, that we may neither give *provocation* to them nor contract *pollution* by them. We should not go into places of temptation but when we *needs must;* and then we should not reside in them, but *hasten through* them. Some think that Christ *must needs* go through Samaria because of the good work he had to do there; a poor woman to be converted, a lost sheep to be sought and saved. This was work his heart was upon, and *therefore* he *must needs* go this

way. It was happy for Samaria that it lay *in Christ's way*, which gave him an opportunity of calling on them. *When I passed by thee, I said unto thee, Live*, Ezek. xvi. 6.

2. His baiting place happened to be at a *city of Samaria*. Now observe,

(1.) The place described. It was called *Sychar;* probably the same with *Sichem*, or *Shechem*, a place which we read much of in the Old Testament. Thus are the names of places commonly corrupted by tract of time. Shechem yielded the first proselyte that ever came into the church of Israel (Gen. xxxiv. 24), and now it is the first place where the gospel is preached out of the commonwealth of Israel; so Dr. Lightfoot observes; as also that the *valley of Achor*, which was given for a *door of hope*, hope to the poor Gentiles, ran along by this city, Hos. ii. 15. Abimelech was made king here; it was Jeroboam's royal seat; but the evangelist, when he would give us the antiquities of the place, takes notice of Jacob's interest there, which was more its honour than its crowned heads. [1.] Here lay Jacob's ground, the *parcel of ground which Jacob* gave to his son Joseph, whose bones were buried in it, Gen. xlviii. 22; Josh. xxiv. 32. Probably this is mentioned to intimate that Christ, when he reposed himself hard by here, took occasion from the ground which Jacob gave Joseph to meditate on the good report which the elders by faith obtained. Jerome chose to live in the land of Canaan, that the sight of the places might affect him the more with scripture stories. [2.] Here was Jacob's well which he digged, or at least used, for himself and his family. We find no mention of this well in the Old Testament; but the tradition was that it was Jacob's well.

(2.) The posture of our Lord Jesus at this place: *Being wearied with his journey, he sat thus on the well.* We have here our Lord Jesus,

[1.] Labouring under the common fatigue of travellers. He was *wearied with his journey*. Though it was yet but the sixth hour, and he had performed but half his day's journey, yet he was weary; or, *because* it was the sixth hour, the time of the heat of the day, therefore he was weary. Here we see, *First*, That he was a *true man*, and subject to the common infirmities of the human nature. Toil came in with sin (Gen. iii. 19), and therefore Christ, having made himself a curse for us, submitted to it. *Secondly*, That he was a *poor man*, else he might have travelled on horseback or in a chariot. To this instance of meanness and mortification he humbled himself for us, that he went all his journeys on foot. When *servants* were on *horses, princes walked as servants on the earth*, Eccl. x. 7. When we are carried easily, let us think on the weariness of our Master. *Thirdly*, It should seem that he was but a *tender man*, and not of a robust constitution; it should seem, his disciples were not tired, for they went into the town without any difficulty, when their Master sat down, and could not go a step further. Bodies of the finest mould are most sensible of fatigue, and can worst bear it.

[2.] We have him here betaking himself to the common relief of travellers: *Being wearied, he sat thus on the well. First*, He sat *on the well*, an *uneasy place*, cold and hard; he had no couch, no easy chair to repose himself in, but took to that which was *next hand*, to teach us not to be nice and curious in the conveniences of this life, but content with *mean things. Secondly*, He sat *thus*, in an *uneasy posture;* sat *carelessly—incuriose et neglectim;* or he sat *so* as people that are wearied with travelling are accustomed to sit.

II. His discourse with a Samaritan woman, which is here recorded at large, while Christ's dispute with the doctors, and his discourse with Moses and Elias on the mount, are buried in silence. This discourse is reducible to four heads:—

1. They discourse *concerning the water*, *v.* 7—15.

(1.) Notice is taken of the *circumstances* that gave occasion to this discourse.

[1.] There comes a *woman* of Samaria to *draw water*. This intimates her poverty, she had no servant to be a *drawer of water;* and her industry, she would do it herself. See here, *First*, How God owns and approves of honest humble diligence in our places. Christ was made known to the shepherds when they were keeping their flock. *Secondly* How the divine Providence brings about glorious purposes by events which seem to us fortuitous and accidental. This woman's meeting with Christ at the well may remind us of the stories of Rebekah, Rachel, and Jethro's daughter, who all met with husbands, good husbands, no worse than Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, when they came to the wells for water. *Thirdly*, How the preventing grace of God sometimes brings people unexpectedly under the means of conversion and salvation. He is found of them that sought him not.

[2.] His disciples were *gone away into the city to buy meat*. Hence learn a lesson, *First*, Of justice and honesty. The meat Christ ate, he bought and paid for, as Paul, 2 Thess. iii. 8. *Secondly*, Of daily dependence upon Providence: *Take no thought for the morrow*. Christ did not go into the city to eat, but sent his disciples to fetch his meat thither; not because he scrupled eating in a Samaritan city, but, 1. Because he had a good work to do at that well, which might be done while they were catering. It is wisdom to fill up our vacant minutes with that which is good, that the *fragments* of time may *not be lost*. Peter, while his dinner was getting ready, fell into a trance, Acts x. 10. 2. Because it was more private and retired, more cheap and homely, to have his dinner

brought him hither, than to go into the town for it. Perhaps his purse was low, and he would teach us *good husbandry*, to *spend* according to what we *have* and not go beyond it. At least, he would teach us not to affect great things. Christ could eat his dinner as well upon a *draw well* as in the best inn in the town. Let us *comport* with our circumstances. Now this gave Christ an opportunity of discoursing with this woman about spiritual concerns, and he improved it; he often preached to multitudes that crowded after him for instruction, yet here he condescends to teach a single person, a woman, a poor woman, a stranger, a Samaritan, to teach his ministers to do likewise, as those that know what a glorious achievement it is to help to save, though but *one soul*, from death.

(2.) Let us observe the *particulars* of this discourse.

[1.] Jesus begins with a modest request for a draught of water: *Give me to drink.* He that *for our sakes became poor* here becomes a beggar, that those who are in want, and cannot dig, may not be ashamed to beg. Christ asked for it, not only because he needed it, and needed her help to come at it, but because he would draw on further discourse with her, and teach us to be willing to be beholden to the meanest when there is occasion. Christ is still begging in his poor members, and a *cup of cold water*, like this here, given to them in his name, shall not lose its reward.

[2.] The woman, though she does not deny his request, yet quarrels with him because he did not carry on the humour of his own nation (*v.* 9): *How is it?* Observe, *First*, What a mortal feud there was between the Jews and the Samaritans: *The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.* The Samaritans were the *adversaries of Judah* (Ezra iv. 1), were upon all occasions mischievous to them. The Jews were extremely malicious against the Samaritans, "looked upon them as having no part in the resurrection, excommunicated and cursed them by the sacred name of God, by the glorious writing of the tables, and by the curse of the upper and lower house of judgment, with this law, That no Israelite eat of any thing that is a Samaritan's, for it is as if he should eat swine's flesh." So Dr. Lightfoot, out of *Rabbi Tanchum.* Note, Quarrels about religion are usually the most implacable of all quarrels. Men were made to *have dealings* one with another; but if men, because one worships at one temple and another at another, will deny the offices of humanity, and charity, and common civility, will be morose and unnatural, scornful and censorious, and this under colour of zeal for religion, they plainly show that however their religion may be *true* they are not *truly religious;* but, pretending to stickle for religion, subvert the design of it. *Secondly*, How ready the woman was to upbraid Christ with the haughtiness and ill nature of the Jewish nation: *How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me?* By his dress or dialect, or both, she knew him to be a Jew, and *thinks it strange* that he runs not to the same excess of riot against the Samaritans with other Jews. Note, Moderate men of all sides are, like Joshua and his fellows (Zech. iii. 8), *men wondered at.* Two things this woman wonders at, 1. That he should *ask* this kindness; for it was the pride of the Jews that they would endure any hardship rather than be beholden to a Samaritan. It was part of Christ's humiliation that he was born of the Jewish nation, which was *now* not only in an *ill state*, subject to the Romans, but in an *ill name* among the nations. With what disdain did Pilate ask, *Am I a Jew?* Thus he *made himself* not only *of no reputation*, but of *ill reputation;* but herein he has set us an example of swimming against the stream of common corruptions. We must, like our Master, put on *goodness* and *kindness*, though it should be ever so much the genius of our country, or the humour of our party, to be morose and ill-natured. This woman expected that Christ should be as other Jews were; but it is unjust to charge upon every individual person even the common faults of the community: no rule but has some exceptions. 2. She wonders that he should *expect to receive* this kindness from her that was a Samaritan: "You Jews could deny it to one of our nation, and why should we grant it to one of yours?" Thus quarrels are propagated endlessly by revenge and retaliation.

[3.] Christ takes this occasion to instruct her in divine things: *If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldst have asked, v.* 10. Observe,

First, He waives her objection of the feud between the Jews and Samaritans, and takes no notice of it. Some differences are best *healed* by being *slighted*, and by avoiding all occasions of *entering into dispute* about them. Christ will convert this woman, not by showing her that the Samaritan worship was *schismatical* (though really it was so), but by showing her her own ignorance and immoralities, and her need of a Saviour.

Secondly, He fills her with an apprehension that she had now an opportunity (a fairer opportunity than she was aware of) of gaining that which would be of unspeakable advantage to her. She had not the helps that the Jews had to discern the signs of the times, and therefore Christ tells her expressly that she had now a season of grace; this was *the day of her visitation.*

a. He hints to her what she *should know*, but was ignorant of: *If thou knewest the gift of God*, that is, as the next words explain it, *who it is that saith, Give me to drink.* If thou knewest *who I am.* She saw him to be a Jew, a poor weary traveller; but he would have her know something more concerning him than did yet appear. Note, (*a.*) Jesus Christ

is the *gift of God,* the richest token of God's love to us, and the richest treasure of all good for us; *a gift,* not a debt which we could demand from God; not a *loan,* which he will demand from us again, but a gift, a free gift, *ch.* iii. 16. (*b.*) It is an unspeakable privilege to have this gift of God proposed and offered to us; to have an opportunity of embracing it: "He who is the gift of God is now set before thee, and addresses himself to *thee;* it is he that saith, *Give me to drink;* this gift comes a begging to thee." (*c.*) Though Christ is set before us, and sues to us in and by his gospel, yet there are multitudes that *know him not.* They know not who it is that speaks to them in the gospel, that saith, *Give me to drink;* they perceive not that it is the Lord that calls them.

b. He hopes concerning her, what she would have done if she had known him; to be sure she would not have given him such a rude and uncivil answer; nay, she would have been so far from affronting him that she would have made her addresses to him: *Thou wouldest have asked.* Note, (*a.*) Those that would have any benefit by Christ must ask for it, must be earnest in prayer to God for it. (*b.*) Those that have a right knowledge of Christ will seek to him, and if we do not seek unto him it is a sign that we do not know him, Ps. ix. 10. (*c.*) Christ knows what they that want the means of knowledge would have done if they had had them, Matt. xi. 21.

c. He assures her what he would have done for her if she had applied to him: "He *would have given thee* (and not have upbraided thee as thou dost me) *living water.*" By this living water is meant the *Spirit,* who is not like the water in the bottom of the well, for some of which he asked, but like *living* or *running* water, which was much more valuable. Note, (*a.*) The Spirit of grace is as *living water;* see *ch.* vii. 38. Under this similitude the blessings of the Messiah had been promised in the Old Testament, Isa. xii. 3; xxxv. 7; xliv. 3; lv. 1; Zech. xiv. 8. The graces of the Spirit, and his comforts, satisfy the thirsting soul, that knows its own nature and necessity. (*b*) Jesus Christ *can* and *will* give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him; for he *received* that he might *give.*

[4.] The woman objects against and cavils at the gracious intimation which Christ gave her (*v.* 11, 12): *Thou hast nothing to draw with;* and besides, *Art thou greater than our father Jacob?* What he spoke figuratively, she took literally; Nicodemus did so too. See what confused notions they have of spiritual things who are wholly taken up with the things that are sensible. Some respect she pays to his person, in calling him *Sir,* or *Lord;* but little respect to what he said, which she does but banter.

First, She does not think him capable of furnishing her with any water, no, not this in the well that is just at hand: *Thou hast nothing to draw with,* and *the well is deep.* This she said, not knowing the power of Christ for he who *causeth the vapours* to ascend from the ends of the earth needs *nothing to draw.* But there are those who will trust Christ no further than they can see him, and will not believe his promise, unless the means of the performance of it be *visible;* as if he were tied to our methods, and could not draw water without our buckets. She asks scornfully, "*Whence hast thou this living water?* I see not whence thou canst have it." Note, The springs of that living water which Christ has for those that come to him are secret and undiscovered. The fountain of life is hid with Christ. Christ has enough for us, though we see not whence he has it.

Secondly, She does not think it possible that he should furnish her with any better water than this which she could come at, but he could not: *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well?*

a. We will suppose the tradition true, that Jacob *himself, and his children, and cattle, did drink of this well.* And we may observe from it, (*a.*) The power and providence of God, in the continuance of the fountains of water from generation to generation, by the constant circulation of the rivers, like the blood in the body (Eccl. i. 7), to which circulation perhaps the flux and reflux of the sea, like the pulses of the heart, contribute. (*b.*) The plainness of the patriarch Jacob; his drink was water, and he and his children drank of the same well with his cattle.

b. Yet, allowing that to be true, she was out in several things; as, (*a.*) In calling Jacob *father.* What authority had the Samaritans to reckon themselves of the seed of Jacob? They were descended from that mixed multitude which the king of Assyria had placed in the cities of Samaria; what have they to do then with Jacob? Because they were the *invaders* of Israel's rights, and the unjust possessors of Israel's lands, were they therefore the *inheritors* of Israel's blood and honour? How absurd were those pretensions! (*b.*) She is out in claiming this well as Jacob's gift, whereas he did no more give it than Moses gave the *manna, ch.* vi. 32. But thus we are apt to call the *messengers* of God's gifts the *donors* of them, and to look so much at the hands they *pass through* as to forget the hand they *come from.* Jacob gave it to his sons, not to *them.* Yet thus the church's enemies not only *usurp,* but monopolize, the church's privileges. (*c.*) She was out in speaking of Christ as not worthy to be compared with our father Jacob. An over-fond veneration for antiquity makes God's graces, in the good people of our own day, to be slighted.

[5.] Christ answers this cavil, and makes it out that the *living water* he had to give was far better than that of Jacob's well, *v.* 13, 14. Though she spoke perversely, Christ did not cast her off, but instructed and encouraged her. He shows her,

First, That the water of Jacob's well yielded but a *transient* satisfaction and supply: "*Whoso drinketh of this water shall thirst again.* It is no better than other water; it will quench the present thirst, but the thirst will return, and in a few hours a man will have as much *need*, and as much *desire*, of water as ever he had." This intimates, 1. The *infirmities* of our bodies in this present state; they are still *necessitous*, and ever *craving*. Life is a *fire*, a *lamp*, which will soon go out, without continual supplies of fuel and oil. The natural heat preys upon itself. 2. The *imperfections* of all our comforts in this world; they are not lasting, nor our satisfaction in them remaining. Whatever waters of comfort we drink of, we shall *thirst again*. Yesterday's meat and drink will not do to-day's work.

Secondly, That the living waters he would give should yield a lasting satisfaction and bliss, *v.* 14. Christ's gifts appear most valuable when they come to be compared with the things of this world; for there will appear no comparison between them. Whoever partakes of the Spirit of grace, and the comforts of the everlasting gospel,

a. He shall *never thirst*, he shall never want that which will abundantly satisfy his soul's desires; they are *longing*, but not *languishing*. A *desiring* thirst he has, nothing more *than* God, still more and more *of* God; but not a *despairing* thirst.

b. Therefore he shall never thirst, because this water that Christ gives *shall be in him a well of water. He* can never be reduced to extremity that has in himself a *fountain* of supply and satisfaction. (*a.*) *Ever ready*, for it shall be *in him*. The principle of grace planted *in him* is the spring of his comfort; see *ch.* vii. 38. A good man is *satisfied from himself*, for Christ *dwells in his heart*. The anointing abides in him; he needs not sneak to the world for comfort; the *work* and the *witness* of the Spirit in the heart furnish him with a firm foundation of hope and an overflowing fountain of joy. (*b.*) *Never failing*, for it shall be in him a *well of water*. He that has at hand only a bucket of water needs not thirst as long as this lasts, but it will soon be *exhausted;* but believers have in them a *well of water*, overflowing, ever flowing. The *principles* and *affections* which Christ's holy religion *forms* in the souls of those that are brought under the power of it are this *well of water*. [*a.*] It is *springing up*, ever in motion, which bespeaks the actings of grace strong and vigorous. If good truths *stagnate* in our souls, like standing water, they do not answer the end of our receiving them. If there be a good treasure in the heart, we must thence bring forth good things. [*b.*] It is springing up *unto everlasting life;* which intimates, *First*, The *aims* of gracious actings. A sanctified soul has its eye upon heaven, means this, designs this, does all for this, will take up with nothing short of this Spiritual life springs up towards its own perfection in eternal life. *Secondly*, The *constancy* of those actings; it will continue springing up till it come to perfection. *Thirdly*, The crown of them, eternal life at last. The living water rises *from* heaven, and therefore rises *towards* heaven; see Eccl. i. 7. And now is not this water better than that of Jacob's well?

[6.] The woman (whether in jest or earnest is hard to say) begs of him to give her some of this water (*v.* 15): *Give me this water, that I thirst not. First*, Some think that she speaks *tauntingly*, and ridicules what Christ had said as mere stuff; and, in derision of it, not *desires*, but *challenges* him to give her some of this water: "A rare invention; it will save me a great deal of *pain* if I *thirst not*, and a great deal of *pains* if I never *come hither to draw*." But, *Secondly*, Others think that it was a *well-meant* but weak and ignorant desire. She apprehended that he meant something very good and useful, and therefore saith *Amen*, at a venture. *Whatever it be*, let me have it; *who will show me any good? Ease*, or saving of labour, is a valuable good to poor labouring people. Note, 1. Even those that are weak and ignorant may yet have some faint and fluctuating desires towards Christ and his gifts, and some good wishes of grace and glory. 2. Carnal hearts, in their best wishes, look no higher than carnal ends. "Give it to me," saith she, "not that I may have everlasting life" (which Christ proposed), "but that I *come not hither to draw*."

2. The next subject of discourse with this woman is *concerning her husband*, *v.* 16—18. It was not to let fall the discourse of the water of life that Christ started this, as many who will bring in any *impertinence* in conversation that they may drop a serious subject; but it was with a gracious design that Christ mentioned it. What he had said concerning his grace and eternal life he found had made little impression upon her, because she had not been convinced of sin: therefore, waiving the discourse about the living water, he sets himself to awaken her conscience, to open the wound of guilt, and then she would more easily apprehend the remedy by grace. And this is the method of dealing with souls; they must first be made *weary* and *heavy-laden* under the burden of sin, and then brought to Christ for rest; first pricked to the heart, and then healed. This is the course of spiritual physic; and if we proceed not in this order we begin at the wrong end.

Observe, (1.) How discreetly and decently Christ introduces this discourse (*v.* 16): *Go, call thy husband, and come hither.* Now, [1.] The order Christ gave her had a *very good colour:* "*Call thy husband*, that he may teach thee, and help thee to understand these things, which thou art so ignorant of." The wives that will learn must *ask their husbands* (1 Cor. xiv. 35), who must dwell with them *as men of knowledge*, 1 Pet. iii. 7. "*Call thy hus-*

band, that he may learn with thee; that then you may be *heirs together of the grace of life. Call thy husband*, that he may be witness to what passes between us." Christ would thus teach us to *provide things honest in the sight of all men*, and to study that which is of good report. [2.] As it had a good colour, so it had a *good design;* for hence he would take occasion to call her sin to remembrance. There is need of art and prudence in giving reproofs; to fetch a compass, as the woman of Tekoa, 2 Sam. xiv. 20.

(2.) How industriously the woman seeks to evade the conviction, and yet insensibly convicts herself, and, ere she is aware, owns her fault; she said, *I have no husband.* Her saying this intimated no more than that she did not care to have her husband spoken of, nor that matter mentioned any more. She would not have her husband come thither, lest, in further discourse, the truth of the matter should come out, to her shame; and therefore, "Pray go on to talk of something else, *I have no husband;*" she would be thought a *maid* or a *widow*, whereas, though she had no husband, she was neither. The carnal mind is very ingenious to *shift off* convictions, and to keep them from fastening, careful to *cover the sin.*

(3.) How closely our Lord Jesus brings home the conviction to her conscience. It is probable that he said more than is here recorded, for she thought that he told her all that ever she did (*v.* 29), but that which is here recorded is concerning her husbands. Here is, [1.] A *surprising narrative* of her *past* conversation: *Thou hast had five husbands.* Doubtless, it was not her *affliction* (the burying of so many husbands), but her *sin*, that Christ intended to upbraid her with; either she had *eloped* (as the law speaks), had run away from her *husbands*, and married others, or by her undutiful, unclean, disloyal conduct, had provoked them to *divorce her*, or by indirect means had, contrary to law, *divorced them.* Those who make light of such scandalous practices as these, as no more than *nine days' wonder*, and as if the guilt were over as soon as the talk is over, should remember that Christ keeps account of all. [2.] A severe reproof of her present state of life: *He whom thou now hast is not thy husband.* Either she was never married to him at all, or he had some other wife, or, which is most probable, her former husband or husbands were living: so that, in short, *she lived in adultery.* Yet observe how mildly Christ tells her of it; he doth not call her *strumpet*, but tells her, *He with whom thou livest is not thy husband:* and then leaves it to her own conscience to say the rest. Note, Reproofs are ordinarily *most profitable* when they are *least provoking.* [3.] Yet in this he puts a better construction than it would well bear upon what she said by way of shuffle and evasion: *Thou hast well said I have no husband;* and again, *In that saidst thou truly* What she intended as a *denial of the fact* (that she had none with whom she lived as a husband) he favourably interpreted, or at least turned upon her, as a *confession of the fault.* Note, Those who would win souls should *make the best* of them, whereby they may hope to *work* upon their *good-nature;* for, if they *make the worst* of them, they certainly *exasperate* their *ill-nature.*

3. The next subject of discourse with this woman is concerning *the place of worship, v.* 19—24. Observe,

(1.) A case of conscience proposed to Christ by the woman, concerning the place of worship, *v.* 19, 20.

[1.] The inducement she had to put this case: *Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.* She does not deny the truth of what he had charged her with, but by her silence owns the justice of the reproof; nor is she put into a passion by it, as many are when they are touched in a sore place, does not impute his censure to the general disgust the Jews had to the Samaritans, but (which is a rare thing) can bear to be told of a fault. But this is not all; she goes further: *First*, She speaks respectfully to him, calls him *Sir.* Thus should we *honour* those that deal faithfully with us. This was the effect of Christ's meekness in reproving her; he gave her no ill language, and then she gave him none. *Secondly*, She acknowledges him to be a *prophet*, one that had a correspondence with Heaven. Note, The power of the word of Christ in searching the heart, and convincing the conscience of secret sins, is a great proof of its divine authority, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. *Thirdly*, She desires some further instruction from him. Many that are not *angry* at their reprovers, nor fly in their faces, yet are *afraid* of them and keep out of their way; but this woman was willing to have some more discourse with him that told her of her faults.

[2.] The case itself that she propounded concerning the *place of religious worship in public.* Some think that she started this to shift off further discourse concerning her sin. Controversies in religion often prove great prejudices to serious godliness; but, it should seem, she proposed it with a good design; she knew she must worship God, and desired to do it aright; and therefore, meeting with a prophet, begs his direction. Note, It is our wisdom to improve all opportunities of getting knowledge in the things of God. When we are in company with those that are *fit to teach*, let us be *forward to learn*, and have a *good question* ready to put to those who are able to give a *good answer.* It was agreed between the Jews and the Samaritans that God is to be worshipped (even those who were such fools as to worship *false* gods were not such brutes as to worship none), and that religious worship is an affair of great importance: men would not *contend* about it if they were not *concerned* about it. But the matter in variance was *where* they should

worship God Observe how she states the case:—

First, As for the Samaritans: *Our fathers worshipped in this mountain*, near to this city and this well; there the Samaritan temple was built by Sanballat, in favour of which she insinuates, 1. That whatever the temple was the place was holy; it was mount *Gerizim*, the mount on which the blessings were pronounced; and some think the same on which Abraham built his altar (Gen. xii. 6, 7), and Jacob his, Gen. xxxiii. 18—20. 2. That it might plead prescription: *Our fathers* worshipped here. She thinks they have antiquity, tradition, and succession, on their side. A *vain conversation* often supports itself with this, that it was *received by tradition from our fathers.* But she had little reason to boast of *their fathers;* for, when Antiochus persecuted the Jews, the Samaritans, for fear of sharing with them in their sufferings, not only renounced all relation to the Jews, but surrendered their temple to Antiochus, with a request that it might be dedicated to Jupiter Olympius, and called by his name. *Joseph. Antiq. lib.* xii. *cap.* 7.

Secondly, As to the Jews: *You say* that *in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.* The Samaritans governed themselves by the five books of Moses, and (some think) received *only them* as canonical. Now, though they found frequent mention there of the place God would choose, yet they did not find it named there; and they saw the temple at Jerusalem stripped of many of its ancient glories, and therefore thought themselves at liberty to set up another place, altar against altar.

(2.) Christ's answer to this case of conscience, *v.* 21, &c. Those that apply themselves to Christ for instruction shall find him *meek, to teach the meek his way.* Now here,

[1.] He puts *a slight* upon the question, as she had proposed it, concerning the place of worship (*v.* 21): "*Woman, believe me* as a prophet, and mark what I say. Thou art expecting the *hour to come* when either by some divine revelation, or some signal providence, this matter shall be decided in favour either of Jerusalem or of Mount Gerizim; but I tell thee the hour is at hand when it shall be no more a question; that which thou hast been taught to lay so much weight on shall be set aside as a thing *indifferent.*" Note, It should cool us in our contests to think that those things which now fill us, and which we make such a noise about, shall shortly *vanish*, and be *no more;* the very things we are striving about are passing away: *The hour comes when you shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. First*, The object of worship is supposed to continue still the same—*God*, as a Father; under this notion the very heathen worshipped God, the Jews did so, and probably the Samaritans. *Secondly*, But a period shall be put to all niceness and all differences about the place of worship. The approaching dissolution of the Jewish economy, and the erecting of the evangelical state, shall set this matter *at large*, and lay all *in common*, so that it shall be a thing perfectly indifferent whether in either of these places or any other men worship God, for they shall not be tied to any place; neither *here* nor *there*, but *both*, and *any where*, and *every where.* Note, The worship of God is not now, under the gospel, appropriated to any place, as it was under the law, but it is God's will that men pray every where. 1 Tim. ii. 8; Mal. i. 11 Our reason teaches us to consult *decency* and *convenience* in the places of our worship: but our religion gives no preference to one place above another, in respect to holiness and acceptableness to God. Those who prefer any worship merely for the sake of the house or building in which it is performed (though it were as magnificent and as *solemnly* consecrated as ever Solomon's temple was) forget that the *hour is come* when there shall be no difference put in God's account; no, not between Jerusalem, which *had been* so famous for sanctity, and the mountain of Samaria, which *had been* so infamous for impiety.

[2.] He *lays a stress* upon other things, in the matter of religious worship. When he made so light of the place of worship he did not intend to lessen our concern about the thing itself, of which therefore he takes occasion to discourse more fully.

First, As to the present state of the controversy, he *determines* against the Samaritan worship, and in favour of the Jews, *v.* 22. He tells her here, 1. That the Samaritans were certainly *in the wrong;* not merely because they worshipped in this mountain, though, while Jerusalem's choice was in force, that was sinful, but because they were out in the object of their worship. If the worship itself had been as it should have been, its separation from Jerusalem might have been connived at, as the *high places* were in the best reigns: *But you worship you know not what*, or *that which you do not know.* They worshipped the God of Israel, the true God (Ezra iv. 2; 2 Kings xvii. 32); but they were sunk into gross ignorance; they worshipped him as the *God of that land* (2 Kings xvii. 27, 33), as a local deity, like the gods of the nations, whereas God must be served *as God*, as the universal cause and Lord. Note, Ignorance is so far from being the *mother* of devotion that it is the *murderer* of it. Those that worship God *ignorantly* offer the *blind for sacrifice*, and it is the *sacrifice of fools.* 2. That the Jews were certainly *in the right.* For, (1.) "*We know what we worship.* We go upon sure grounds in our worship, for our people are catechised and trained up in the knowledge of God, as he has revealed himself in the scripture." Note, Those who by the scriptures have obtained some knowledge of God (a *certain* though not a *perfect* knowledge) may worship him *comfortably* to

themselves, and *acceptably* to him, for they *know what they worship.* Christ elsewhere condemns the corruptions of the Jews' worship (Matt. xv. 9), and yet here defends the worship itself; the worship may be *true* where yet it is not *pure* and *entire.* Observe, Our Lord Jesus was pleased to reckon himself among the *worshippers* of God: *We worship. Though he was a Son* (and then are the children free), *yet learned he this obedience,* in the days of his humiliation. Let not the greatest of men think the worship of God below them, when the Son of God himself did not. (2.) *Salvation is of the Jews;* and therefore they know what they worship, and what grounds they go upon in their worship. Not that all the Jews were saved, nor that it was not possible but that many of the Gentiles and Samaritans might be saved, for in *every nation* he that fears God and works righteousness is *accepted of him;* but, [1.] The author of eternal salvation comes of the Jews, appears among them (Rom. ix. 5), and is sent first to *bless* them. [2.] The means of eternal salvation are afforded to them. The *word of salvation* (Acts xiii. 26) was *of the Jews.* It was delivered to them, and other nations derived it through them. This was a sure guide to them in their devotions, and they followed it, and therefore knew what they worshipped. To them were committed the *oracles of God* (Rom. iii. 2), and the *service of God,* Rom. ix. 4. The Jews therefore being thus privileged and advanced, it was presumption for the Samaritans to vie with them.

Secondly, He describes the evangelical worship which alone God would accept and be well pleased with. Having shown that the place is *indifferent,* he comes to show what is *necessary* and *essential*—that we worship God *in spirit and in truth, v.* 23, 24. The stress is not to be laid upon the *place* where we worship God, but upon the state of *mind* in which we worship him. Note, The most effectual way to take up differences in the minor matters of religion is to be more zealous in the greater. Those who daily make it the matter of their care to worship *in the spirit,* one would think, should not make it the matter of their strife whether he should be worshipped here or there. Christ had justly preferred the Jewish worship before the Samaritan, yet here he intimates the imperfection of that. The worship was *ceremonial,* Heb. ix. 1, 10. The worshippers were generally *carnal,* and strangers to the *inward part* of divine worship. Note, It is possible that we may be better than our neighbours, and yet not so good as we should be. It concerns us to be right, not only in the *object* of our worship, but in the *manner* of it; and it is this which Christ here instructs us in. Observe,

a. The great and glorious revolution which should introduce this change: *The hour cometh, and now is*—the fixed stated time, concerning which it was of old determined when it should come, and how long it should last. The time of its *appearance* is *fixed* to an hour, so punctual and exact are the divine counsels; the time of its *continuance* is *limited* to an hour, so close and pressing is the opportunity of divine grace, 2 Cor. vi. 2. This hour *cometh,* it is coming in its full strength, lustre, and perfection, it *now is* in the embryo and infancy. The *perfect day is coming,* and now it *dawns.*

b. The blessed change itself. In gospel times the *true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.* As creatures, we worship the Father of *all:* as Christians, we worship *the Father of our Lord Jesus.* Now the change shall be, (*a.*) In the *nature* of the worship. Christians shall worship God, not in the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic institution, but in *spiritual* ordinances, consisting less in *bodily exercise,* and animated and invigorated more with divine power and energy. The way of worship which Christ has instituted is rational and intellectual, and refined from those external rites and ceremonies with which the Old-Testament worship was both clouded and clogged. This is called true worship, in opposition to that which was typical. The legal services were *figures of the true,* Heb. ix. 3, 24. Those that revolted from Christianity to Judaism are said to *begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh,* Gal. iii. 3. Such was the difference between Old-Testament and New-Testament institutions. (*b.*) In the *temper* and *disposition* of the worshippers; and so the true worshippers are good Christians, distinguished from hypocrites; all *should,* and they will, worship God *in spirit and in truth.* It is spoken of (*v.* 23) as their character, and (*v* 24) as their duty. Note, It is required of all that worship God that they worship him *in spirit and in truth.* We must worship God, [*a.*] *In spirit,* Phil. iii. 3. We must depend upon *God's Spirit* for strength and assistance, laying our souls under his influences and operations; we must devote *our own spirits* to, and employ them in, the service of God (Rom. i. 9), must worship him with fixedness of thought and a flame of affection, with *all that is within us.* Spirit is sometimes put for the new nature, in opposition to the *flesh,* which is the corrupt nature; and so to worship God *with our spirits* is to worship him *with our graces,* Heb. xii. 28. [*b.*] *In truth,* that is, in *sincerity.* God requires not only the *inward part* in our worship, but *truth in the inward part,* Ps. li. 6. We must mind the power more than the form, must aim at God's glory, and not to be *seen of men;* draw near with a *true heart,* Heb. x. 22.

Thirdly, He intimates the reasons why God must be thus worshipped.

a. Because in gospel times they, and they only, are accounted the *true* worshippers. The gospel erects a spiritual way of worship, so that the professors of the gospel are not

true in their profession, do not live up to gospel light and laws, if they do not worship God *in spirit and in truth.*

b. Because *the Father seeketh such worshippers of him.* This intimates, (*a.*) That such worshippers are very rare, and seldom met with, Jer. xxx. 21. The gate of spiritual worshipping is strait. (*b.*) That such worship is necessary, and what the God of heaven insists upon. When God comes to *enquire* for worshippers, the question will not be, "Who worshipped at Jerusalem?" but, "Who worshipped in spirit?" That will be the touchstone. (*c.*) That God is greatly well pleased with and graciously accepts such worship and such worshippers. *I have desired it,* Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14; Cant. ii. 14. (*d.*) That there has been, and will be to the end, a remnant of such worshippers; his *seeking* such worshippers implies his *making* them such. God is in all ages gathering in to himself a generation of spiritual worshippers.

c. Because *God is a spirit.* Christ came to *declare God* to us (*ch.* i. 18), and this he has declared concerning him; he declared it to this poor Samaritan woman, for the meanest are concerned to know God; and with this design, to rectify her mistakes concerning religious worship, to which nothing would contribute more than the right knowledge of God. Note, (*a.*) *God is a spirit,* for he is an infinite and eternal mind, an intelligent being, incorporeal, immaterial, invisible, and incorruptible. It is easier to say what God is not than what he is; a spirit *has not flesh and bones,* but *who knows the way of a spirit?* If God were not *a spirit,* he could not be *perfect,* nor infinite, nor eternal, nor independent, nor the Father of spirits. (*b.*) The spirituality of the divine nature is a very good reason for the spirituality of divine worship. If we do not worship God, who is *a spirit, in the spirit,* we neither *give him the glory due to his name,* and so do not perform the *act* of worship, nor can we hope to obtain his favour and acceptance, and so we miss of the *end* of worship, Matt. xv. 8, 9.

4. The last subject of discourse with this woman is concerning the Messiah, *v.* 25, 26. Observe here,

(1.) The faith of the woman, by which she expected the Messiah: *I know that Messias cometh—and he will tell us all things.* She had nothing to object against what Christ had said; his discourse was, for aught she knew, what might become the Messiah then expected; but *from him* she would receive it, and in the mean time she thinks it best to suspend her belief. Thus many have no heart to the price *in their hand* (Prov. xvii. 16), because they think they have a better *in their eye,* and deceive themselves with a promise that they will learn that *hereafter* which they neglect *now.* Observe here,

[1.] Whom she expects: *I know that Messias cometh.* The Jews and Samaritans, though so much at variance, agreed in the expectation of the Messiah and his kingdom. The Samaritans received the writings of Moses, and were no strangers to the prophets, nor to the hopes of the Jewish nation; those who knew least knew this, that Messias was to come; so general and uncontested was the expectation of him, and at this time more raised than ever (for the sceptre was departed from Judah, Daniel's weeks were near expiring), so that she concludes not only, *He will come,* but ἔρχεται—"*He comes,* he is just at hand:" *Messias, who is called Christ.* The evangelist, though he retains the Hebrew word *Messias* (which the woman used in honour to the holy language, and to the Jewish church, that used it familiarly), yet, writing for the use of the Gentiles, he takes care to render it by a Greek word of the same signification, *who is called Christ—Anointed,* giving an example to the apostle's rule, that whatever is spoken in an unknown or less vulgar tongue should be *interpreted,* 1 Cor. xiv. 27, 28.

[2.] What she expects from him: "*He will tell us all things* relating to the service of God which it is needful for us to know, will tell us that which will supply our defects, rectify our mistakes, and put an end to all our disputes. He will tell us the mind of God fully and clearly, and keep back nothing." Now this implies an acknowledgment, *First,* Of the deficiency and imperfection of the discovery they now had of the divine will, and the rule they had of the divine worship; it *could not make the comers thereunto perfect,* and therefore they expected some great advance and improvement in matters of religion, a time of reformation. *Secondly,* Of the sufficiency of the Messiah to make this change: "*He will tell us all things* which we want to know, and about which we wrangle in the dark. He will introduce *peace,* by *leading us into all truth,* and dispelling the mists of error." It seems, this was the comfort of good people in those dark times that light would arise; if they found themselves at a loss, and run aground, it was a satisfaction to them to say, *When Messias comes, he will tell us all things;* as it may be to us now with reference to his second coming: now we see through a glass, but then *face to face.*

(2.) The favour of our Lord Jesus in making himself known to her: *I that speak to thee am he, v.* 26. Christ did never make himself known so expressly to any as he did here to this poor Samaritan, and to the blind man (*ch.* ix. 37); no, not to John Baptist, when he sent to him (Matt. xi. 4, 5); no, not to the Jews, when they challenged him to tell them whether he was the Christ, *ch.* x. 24. But, [1.] Christ would thus put an honour upon such as were poor and despised, Jam. ii. 6. [2.] This woman, for aught we know, had never had any opportunity of seeing Christ's miracles, which were then the ordinary method of conviction. Note, To those

who have not the advantage of the *external* means of knowledge and grace God hath *secret* ways of making up the want of them; we must therefore judge charitably concerning such. God can make the light of grace shine *into the heart* even where he doth not make the light of the gospel shine *in the face.* [3.] This woman was better prepared to receive such a discovery than others were; she was big with expectation of the Messiah, and ready to receive instruction from him. Christ will manifest himself to those who with an honest humble heart desire to be acquainted with him: *I that speak to thee am he.* See here, *First,* How near Jesus Christ was to her, when she knew not who he was, Gen. xxviii. 16. Many are lamenting Christ's absence, and longing for his presence, when at the same time he is speaking to them. *Secondly,* How Christ makes himself known to us by *speaking* to us: *I that speak unto thee,* so closely, so convincingly, with such assurance, with such authority, *I am he.*

27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? 28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? 30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. 31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. 32 But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. 33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat? 34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. 35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. 36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. 37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. 38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. 39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. 40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 41 And many more believed, because of his own word; 42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

We have here the remainder of the story of what happened when Christ was in Samaria, after the long conference he had with the woman

I. The *interruption given to this discourse* by the disciples' coming. It is probable that much more was said than is recorded; but just when the discourse was brought to a head, when Christ had made himself known to her as the true Messiah, *then came the disciples.* The *daughters of Jerusalem* shall not *stir up nor awake my love till he please.* 1. They wondered at Christ's converse with this woman, marvelled that he talked thus earnestly (as perhaps they observed at a distance) with a woman, a strange woman alone (he used to be more *reserved),* especially with a Samaritan woman, that was not of the lost sheep of the house of Israel; they thought their Master should be as shy of the Samaritans as the other Jews were, at least that he should not preach the gospel to them. They wondered he should condescend to talk with such a poor contemptible woman, forgetting what despicable men they themselves were when Christ first called them into fellowship with himself. 2. Yet they acquiesced in it; they knew it was for some good reason, and some good end, of which he was not bound to give them an account, and therefore none of them asked, *What seekest thou?* or, *Why talkest thou with her?* Thus, when particular difficulties occur in the word and providence of God, it is good to satisfy ourselves with this in general, that all is well which Jesus Christ saith and doeth. Perhaps there was something *amiss* in their *marvelling* that *Christ talked with the woman:* it was something like the Pharisees being offended at his eating with publicans and sinners. But, whatever they *thought,* they said *nothing. If thou hast thought evil* at any time, *lay thy hand upon thy mouth,* to keep that evil thought from turning into an evil word, Prov. xxx. 32; Ps. xxxix. 1—3.

II. The notice which the woman gave to her neighbours of the extraordinary person she had happily met with, *v.* 28, 29. Observe here,

1. How she *forgot her errand to the well, v.* 28. Therefore, because the disciples were come, and broke up the discourse, and per-

haps she observed they were not pleased with it, she *went her way*. She withdrew, in civility to Christ, that he might have leisure to *eat his dinner*. She delighted in his discourse, but would not be *rude;* every thing is beautiful in its season. She supposed that Jesus, when he had dined, would go forward in his journey, and therefore hastened to tell her neighbours, that they might come quickly. *Yet a little while is the light with you.* See how she improved time; when one good work was done, she applied herself to another. When opportunities of *getting good* cease, or are interrupted, we should seek opportunities of *doing good;* when we have done *hearing* the word, then is a time to be *speaking* of it. Notice is taken of her *leaving her water-pot* or *pail*. (1.) She left it in kindness to Christ, that he might have water to drink with his dinner, for fair water was his drink; he turned water into wine for others, but not for himself. Compare this with Rebecca's civility to Abraham's servant (Gen. xxiv. 18), and see that promise, Matt. x. 42. (2.) She left it that she might make the more haste into the city, to carry thither these good tidings. Those whose business it is to publish the name of Christ must not encumber or entangle themselves with any thing that will retard or hinder them therein. When the disciples are to be made fishers of men they must *forsake all*. (3.) She left her water-pot, as one *careless of it*, being wholly taken up with better things. Note, Those who are brought to the knowledge of Christ will show it by a holy contempt of this world and the things of it. And those who are *newly* acquainted with the things of God must be *excused*, if at first they be so taken up with the new world into which they are brought that the things of this world seem to be for a time wholly neglected. Mr. Hildersham, in one of his sermons on this verse, from this instance largely justifies those who leave their worldly business on week-days to go to hear sermons.

2. How she *minded her errand to the town*, for her heart was upon it. She *went into the city*, and said to *the men*, probably the aldermen, the men in authority, whom, it may be, she found met together upon some public business; or to *the men*, that is, to every man she met in the streets; she proclaimed it in the chief places of concourse: *Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?* Observe,

(1.) How *solicitous* she was to *have her friends and neighbours* acquainted with Christ. When she had found that treasure, she *called together her friends and neighbours* (as Luke xv. 9), not only to *rejoice with her*, but to share with her, knowing there was enough to enrich herself and all that would partake with her. Note, They that have been themselves with Jesus, and have found comfort in him, should do all they can to bring others to him. Has he done us the honour to make himself known to us? Let us do him the honour to make him known to others; nor can we do ourselves a greater honour. This woman becomes an apostle. *Quæ scortum fuerat egressa, regreditur magistra evangelica —She who went forth a specimen of impurity returns a teacher of evangelical truth*, saith *Aretius*. Christ had told her to *call her husband*, which she thought was warrant enough to *call every body*. She went into *the city*, the city where she dwelt, among her kinsfolks and acquaintance. Though every man is my neighbour that I have opportunity of doing good to, yet I have most *opportunity*, and therefore lie under the greatest *obligations*, to do good to those that live near me. *Where the tree falls*, there let it be made useful.

(2.) How fair and ingenuous she was in the notice she gave them concerning this stranger she had met with. [1.] She *tells them* plainly what induced her to admire him: *He has told me all things that ever I did.* No more is recorded than what he told her of her husbands; but it is not improbable that he had told her of more of her faults. Or, his telling her that which she knew he could not by any ordinary means come to the knowledge of convinced her that he could have told her all that she ever did. If he has a *divine* knowledge, it must be omniscience. He told her that which none knew but God and her own conscience. Two things affected her:—*First, the extent of his knowledge.* We ourselves cannot tell *all things that ever we did* (many things pass *unheeded*, and more pass away and are forgotten); but Jesus Christ knows all the thoughts, words, and actions, of all the children of men; see Heb. iv. 13. He hath said, *I know thy works. Secondly, The power of his word.* This made a great impression upon her, that he told her her *secret sins* with such an unaccountable power and energy that, being told of one, she is *convinced of all, and judged of all.* She does not say, "Come, see a man that has told me strange things concerning religious worship, and the laws of it, that has decided the controversy between this mountain and Jerusalem, a man that calls himself the *Messias;*" but, "*Come see a man* that has told me of my sins." She fastens upon that part of Christ's discourse which one would think she would have been most shy of repeating; but experimental proofs of the power of Christ's word and Spirit are of all others the most cogent and convincing; and that *knowledge of Christ* into which we are led by the conviction of sin and humiliation is most likely to be *sound* and *saving*. [2.] She *invites them* to *come and see* him of whom she had conceived so high an opinion. Not barely, "Come and look upon him" (she does not invite them to him as a *show*), but, "Come and converse with him; come and *hear his wisdom*, as I have done, and you will be of my mind. She would not undertake to

manage the arguments which had convinced her, in such a manner as to convince others; all that see the evidence of truth themselves are not able to make others see it; but, "Come, and talk with him, and you will find such a power in his word as far exceeds all other evidence." Note, Those who can do little else towards the conviction and conversion of others may and should bring them to those means of grace which they themselves have found effectual. Jesus was now at the town's end. "Now come see him." When opportunities of getting the knowledge of God are brought to our doors we are inexcusable if we neglect them; shall we not go over the threshold to see him whose day prophets and kings desired to see? [3.] She resolves to *appeal to themselves*, and their own sentiments upon the trial? *Is not this the Christ?* She does not peremptorily say, "He is the Messiah," how clear soever she was in her own mind, and yet she very prudently mentions the Messiah, of whom otherwise they would not have thought, and then refers it to themselves; she will not impose her faith upon them, but only propose it to them. By such fair but forcible appeals as these men's judgments and consciences are sometimes taken hold of ere they are aware.

(3.) What success she had in this invitation: *They went out of the city, and came to him, v.* 30. Though it might seem very improbable that a woman of so *small* a figure, and so *ill* a character, should have the honour of the first discovery of the Messiah among the Samaritans, yet it pleased God to incline their hearts to take notice of her report, and not to slight it as an idle tale. Time was when lepers were the first that brought tidings to Samaria of a great deliverance, 2 Kings vii. 3, &c. They *came unto him;* did not send for him into the city to them, but in token of their respect to him, and the earnestness of their desire to see him, they *went out to him.* Those that would know Christ must meet him where he records his name.

III. Christ's discourse with his disciples while the woman was absent, *v.* 31—38. See how industrious our Lord Jesus was to *redeem time*, to husband every minute of it, and to *fill up* the vacancies of it. When the disciples were gone into the town, his discourse with the woman was *edifying*, and suited to her case; when she was gone into the town, his discourse with them was no less edifying, and suited to their case; it were well if we could *thus* gather up the fragments of time, that none of it may be lost. Two things are observable in this discourse:—

1. How Christ *expresses the delight* which he himself had in his work. His work was to *seek and save* that which was lost, to go about doing good. Now with this work we here find him wholly taken up. For,

(1.) *He neglected his meat and drink for his work.* When he sat down upon the well, he was *weary*, and needed refreshment; but this opportunity of saving souls made him forget his weariness and hunger. And he minded *his food* so little that, [1.] His disciples were forced to invite him to it: *They prayed him*, they pressed him, saying, *Master, eat.* It was an instance of their *love to him* that they invited him, lest he should be faint and sick for want of some support; but it was a greater instance of his *love to souls* that he needed invitation. Let us learn hence a holy indifference even to the needful supports of life, in comparison with spiritual things. [2.] He minded it so little that they suspected he had had meat brought him in their absence (*v.* 33): *Has any man brought him aught to eat?* He had so little appetite for his dinner that they were ready to think he had dined already. Those that make religion their business will, when any of its affairs are to be attended, prefer them before their food; as Abraham's servant, that would not eat till he had told his errand (Gen. xxiv. 33), and Samuel, that would not sit down till David was anointed, 1 Sam. xvi. 11.

(2.) He *made his work his meat and drink.* The work he *had done* in instructing the woman, the work he *had to do* among the Samaritans, the prospect he now had of doing good to many, this was *meat and drink* to him; it was the greatest pleasure and satisfaction imaginable. Never did a hungry man, or an epicure, expect a plentiful feast with so much desire, nor feed upon its dainties with so much delight, as our Lord Jesus expected and improved an opportunity of doing good to souls. Concerning this he saith, [1.] That it was such *meat* as the disciples *knew not of.* They did not imagine that he had any design or prospect of planting his gospel among the Samaritans; this was a piece of usefulness they never thought of. Note, Christ by his gospel and Spirit does more good to the souls of men than his own disciples *know of* or *expect.* This may be said of good Christians too, who live by faith, that they have meat to eat which others know not of, joy with which a stranger does not intermeddle. Now this word made them ask, *Has any man brought him aught to eat?* so apt were even his own disciples to understand him after a corporal and carnal manner when he used similitudes. [2.] That the reason why his work was his meat and drink was because it was his Father's work, his Father's will: *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, v.* 34. Note, *First*, The salvation of sinners is the *will of God*, and the instruction of them in order thereunto is *his work.* See 1 Tim. ii. 4. There is a chosen remnant whose salvation is in a particular manner his will. *Secondly*, Christ was *sent into the world* on this errand, to bring people to God, to know him and to be happy in him. *Thirdly*, He made this work his business and delight. When his body

needed food, his mind was so taken up with this that he forgot both hunger and thirst, both meat and drink. Nothing could be more grateful to him than doing good; when he was invited *to meat* he went, that he might *do good*, for that was his meat always. *Fourthly*, He was not only ready upon all occasions to go to his work, but he was *earnest* and in care to go *through* it, and to *finish his work* in all the parts of it. He resolved never to quit it, nor lay it down, till he could say, *It is finished*. Many have zeal to carry them *out* at first, but not zeal to carry them *on* to the last; but our Lord Jesus was intent upon *finishing his work*. Our Master has herein left us an example, that we may learn to do the will of God as he did; 1. With diligence and close application, as those that make a business of it. 2. With delight and pleasure in it, as in our element. 3. With constancy and perseverance; not only minding to *do*, but aiming to *finish*, our work.

2. See here how Christ, having expressed his delight in *his* work, excites his disciples to diligence in *their* work; they were workers *with him*, and therefore should be workers *like him*, and make their work their *meat*, as he did. The work they had to do was to *preach the gospel*, and to set up the kingdom of the Messiah. Now this work he here compares to *harvest work*, the gathering in of the fruits of the earth; and this similitude he prosecutes throughout the discourse, *v.* 35—38. Note, gospel time is harvest time, and gospel work harvest work. The harvest is before *appointed* and expected; so was the gospel. Harvest time is *busy* time; all hands must be then at work: every one must work for *himself*, that he may reap of the graces and comforts of the gospel: ministers must work *for God*, to gather in souls to him. Harvest time is *opportunity*, a short and limited time, which will not last always; and harvest work is work that must be done *then* or not at all; so the time of the enjoyment of the gospel is a particular season, which must be improved for its proper purposes; for, once past, it cannot be recalled. The disciples were to gather in a harvest of souls for Christ. Now he here suggests three things to them to quicken them to diligence:—

(1.) That it was *necessary work*, and the *occasion* for it very urgent and pressing (*v.*35): *You say, It is four months to harvest;* but I say, *The fields are already white*. Here is,

[1.] A saying of Christ's disciples concerning the *corn-harvest;* there *are yet four months, and then comes harvest*, which may be taken either *generally*—"You say, for the encouragement of the sower at seed-time, that it will be but four months to the harvest." With us it is but about four months between the barley-sowing and the barley-harvest, probably it was so with them as to other grain; or, "Particularly, now at this time you reckon it will be four months to next harvest, according to the ordinary course of providence." The Jews' harvest began at the Passover, about Easter, much earlier in the year than ours, by which it appears that this journey of Christ from Judea to Galilee was in the winter, about the end of November, for he travelled *all weathers* to do good. God has not only promised us a harvest every year, but has appointed the *weeks of harvest;* so that we know *when* to expect it, and take our measures accordingly.

[2.] A saying of Christ's concerning the *gospel harvest;* his heart was as much upon the fruits of his gospel as the hearts of others were upon the fruits of the earth; and to this he would lead the thoughts of his disciples: *Look, the fields are already white unto the harvest. First*, Here in *this* place, where they *now* were, there was harvest work for *him* to do. They would have him to *eat*, *v.* 31. "Eat!" saith he, "I have other work to do, that is more needful; *look* what crowds of Samaritans are coming out of the town over the fields that are ready to receive the gospel;" probably there were many now in view. People's forwardness to hear the word is a great excitement to ministers' diligence and liveliness in preaching it. *Secondly*, In *other places*, all the country over, there was harvest work enough for them all to do. "*Consider the regions*, think of the state of the country, and you will find there are multitudes as ready to receive the gospel as a field of corn that is fully ripe is ready to be reaped." The fields were now made *white to the harvest*, 1. By the *decree of God* revealed in the prophecies of the Old Testament. Now was the time when the gathering of the people should be to Christ (Gen. xlix. 10), when great accessions should be made to the church and the bounds of it should be enlarged, and therefore it was time for them to be busy. It is a great encouragement to us to engage in any work for God, if we understand by the signs of the times that this is the proper season for that work, for then it will prosper. 2. By the *disposition of men*. John Baptist had *made ready a people prepared for the Lord*, Luke i. 17. Since he began to preach the kingdom of God *every man pressed into it*, Luke xvi. 16. This, therefore, was a time for the preachers of the gospel to apply themselves to their work with the utmost vigour, to *thrust in their sickle*, when the harvest was ripe, Rev. xiv. 15. It was *necessary* to work now, pity that such a season should be let slip. If the corn that is *ripe* be not reaped, it will *shed* and be lost, and the fowls will pick it up. If souls that are under convictions, and have some good inclinations, be not helped now, their hopeful beginnings will come to nothing, and they will be a prey to pretenders. It was also *easy* to work now; when the people's hearts are *prepared* the work will be done *suddenly*, 2 Chron. xxix. 36. It cannot but quicken ministers to take

pains in preaching the word when they observe that people *take pleasure* in hearing it.

(2.) That it was *profitable* and *advantageous* work, which they themselves would be gainers by (*v.* 36): "*He that reapeth receiveth wages,* and so shall you." Christ has undertaken to pay those well whom he employs in his work; for he will never do as Jehoiakim did, *who used his neighbour's service without wages* (Jer. xxii. 13), or those who *by fraud kept back the hire of those* particularly *who reaped their corn-fields,* Jam. v. 4. Christ's reapers, though they cry *to him* day and night, shall never have cause to cry *against him,* nor to say they served a hard Master. He that reapeth, not only *shall* but *does* receive wages. There is a present reward in the service of Christ, and his work is *its own wages.* [1.] Christ's reapers have *fruit: He gathereth fruit unto life eternal;* that is, he shall both save himself and those that hear him, 1 Tim. iv. 16. If the faithful reaper save his own soul, that is fruit abounding to his account, it is fruit gathered to *life eternal;* and if, over and above this, he be instrumental to save the souls of others too, there is *fruit gathered.* Souls gathered to Christ are fruit, good fruit, the fruit that Christ seeks for (Rom. i. 13); it is gathered for Christ (Cant. viii. 11, 12); it is gathered to *life eternal.* This is the comfort of faithful ministers, that their work has a tendency to the eternal salvation of precious souls. [2.] They have *joy: That he that sows and they that reap may rejoice together.* The minister who is the happy instrument of beginning a good work is *he that sows,* as John Baptist; he that is employed to carry it on and perfect it is *he that reaps:* and both shall rejoice together. Note, *First,* Though God is to have all the glory of the success of the gospel, yet faithful ministers may themselves take the comfort of it. The reapers share in the *joy of harvest,* though the profits belong to the master, 1 Thess. ii. 19. *Secondly,* Those ministers who are variously gifted and employed should be so far from envying one another that they should rather mutually rejoice in each other's success and usefulness. Though all Christ's ministers are not alike *serviceable,* nor alike *successful,* yet, if they have obtained mercy of the Lord to be *faithful,* they shall all enter *together into the joy of their Lord* at last.

(3.) That it was *easy work,* and work that was half done to their hands by those that were gone before them: *One soweth, and another reapeth, v.* 37, 38. This sometimes denotes a grievous judgment upon him that sows, Mic. vi. 15; Deut. xxviii. 30, *Thou shalt sow, and another shall reap;* as Deut. vi. 11, *Houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not.* So here. Moses, and the prophets, and John Baptist, had *paved* the way to the gospel, had sown the good seed which the New-Testament ministers did in effect but gather the fruit of. *I sent you to reap that whereon you bestowed,* in comparison, no *labour.* Isa. xl. 3—5. [1.] This intimates *two things* concerning the Old-Testament ministry:—*First,* That it was very much *short* of the New-Testament ministry. Moses and the *prophets* sowed, but they could not be said to *reap,* so little did they see of the fruit of their labours. Their writings have done much more good since they left us than ever their preaching did. *Secondly,* That it was very *serviceable* to the New-Testament ministry, and made way for it. The writings of the prophets, which were read in the synagogues every sabbath day, raised people's expectations of the Messiah, and so prepared them to bid him welcome. Had it not been for the seed sown by the prophets, this Samaritan woman could not have said, *We know that Messias cometh.* The writings of the Old Testament are in some respects more useful to us than they could be to those to whom they were first written, because better understood by the accomplishment of them. See 1 Pet. i. 12; Heb. iv. 2; Rom. xvi. 25, 26. [2.] This also intimates *two things* concerning the ministry of the *apostles of Christ. First,* That it was a *fruitful* ministry: they were reapers that gathered in a great harvest of souls to Jesus Christ, and did more in seven years towards the setting up of the kingdom of God among men than the prophets of the Old Testament had done in twice so many ages. *Secondly,* That it was much *facilitated,* especially among the Jews, to whom they were first sent, by the writings of the prophets. The prophets *sowed in tears,* crying out, *We have laboured in vain;* the apostles *reaped in joy,* saying, *Thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph.* Note, From the labours of ministers that are dead and gone much good fruit may be reaped by the people that *survive* them and the ministers that *succeed* them. John Baptist, and those that assisted him, had *laboured,* and the disciples of Christ entered into their labours, built upon their foundation, and reaped the fruit of what they sowed. See what reason we have to bless God for those that are *gone before us,* for their preaching and their writing, for what they *did* and *suffered* in their day, for we are *entered into their labours;* their studies and services have made our work the easier. And when the ancient and modern labourers, those tha came into the vineyard at the third hour and those that came in at the eleventh, meet in the day of account, they will be so far from envying one another the honour of their respective services that both *they that sowed* and they that *reaped* shall rejoice together; and the great Lord of the harvest shall have the glory of all.

IV. The *good effect* which this visit Christ made to the Samaritans (*en passant*) had upon them, and the fruit which was now presently gathered among them, *v.* 39—42. See what impressions were made on them,

1. By the *woman's testimony* concerning

Christ; though a single testimony, and of one of no good report, and the testimony no more than this, *He told me all that ever I did,* yet it had a good influence upon many. One would have thought that his telling the woman of her secret sins would have made them afraid of coming to him, lest he should tell them also of their faults; but they will venture that rather than not be acquainted with one who they had reason to think was a prophet. And *two things* they were brought to:—

(1.) To *credit* Christ's *word* (*v.* 39): *Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman.* So far they *believed on him* that they took him for a *prophet,* and were desirous to know the mind of God from him; this is favourably interpreted a believing on him. Now observe, [1.] Who they were that believed: *Many of the Samaritans,* who were not of the house of Israel. Their faith was not only an *aggravation* of the *unbelief* of the Jews, from whom better might have been expected, but an *earnest* of the *faith* of the Gentiles, who would welcome that which the Jews rejected. [2.] Upon what inducement they believed: *For the saying of the woman.* See here, *First,* How God is sometimes pleased to use very weak and unlikely instruments for the beginning and carrying on of a good work. A little maid directed a great prince to Elisha, 2 Kings v. 2. *Secondly,* How great a matter a little fire kindles. Our Saviour, by instructing one poor woman, spread instruction to a whole town. Let not ministers be either *careless* in their preaching, or *discouraged* in it, because their hearers are *few* and *mean;* for, by doing good to *them,* good may be conveyed to *more,* and those that are more considerable. If they *teach every man his neighbour,* and *every man his brother,* a great number may learn at *second hand.* Philip preached the gospel to a single gentleman in his chariot upon the road, and he not only received it himself, but carried it into his country, and propagated it there. *Thirdly,* See how good it is to speak *experimentally* of Christ and the things of God. This woman could say little of Christ, but what she did say she spoke feelingly: *He told me all that ever I did.* Those are most likely to do good that can tell what God has done *for their souls,* Ps. lxvi. 16.

(2.) They were brought to *court his stay* among them (*v.* 40): When they were come to him *they besought him that he would tarry with them.* Upon the woman's report, they believed him to be a prophet, and *came to him;* and, when they *saw* him, the meanness of his appearance and the manifest poverty of his outward condition did not lessen their esteem of him and expectations from him, but still they respected him as a prophet. Note, There is hope of those who are got over the vulgar prejudices that men have against *true worth* in a *low estate.* Blessed are they that are not offended in Christ at the *first sight.* So far were they from being offended in him that they begged he would tarry with them; [1.] That they might *testify their respect* to him, and treat him with the honour and kindness due to his character. God's prophets and ministers are welcome guests to all those who sincerely embrace the gospel; as to Lydia, Acts xvi. 15. [2.] That they might receive instruction from him. Those that are taught of God are truly desirous to learn more, and to be better acquainted with Christ. Many would have flocked to one that would tell them *their fortune,* but these flocked to one that would tell them *their faults,* tell them of their sin and duty. The historian seems to lay an emphasis upon their being Samaritans; as Luke x. 33; xvii. 16. The Samaritans had not that reputation for religion which the Jews had; yet the Jews, who saw Christ's miracles, drove him from them: while the Samaritans, who saw not his miracles, nor shared in his favours, invited him to them. The *proof* of the gospel's success is not always according to the *probability,* nor what is *experienced* according to what is *expected* either way. The Samaritans were taught by the custom of their country to be shy of conversation with the Jews. There were Samaritans that refused to let Christ go through their town (Luke ix. 53), but these begged him to tarry with them. Note, It adds much to the praise of our love to Christ and his word if it conquers the prejudices of education and custom, and sets light by the censures of men. Now we are told that Christ granted their request.

First, He *abode there.* Though it was a city of the Samaritans nearly adjoining to their temple, yet, when he was *invited,* he *tarried* there; though he was upon a journey, and had further to go, yet, when he had an opportunity of doing good, he *abode there.* That is no real *hindrance* which will *further* our account. Yet he abode there but *two days,* because he had other places to visit and other work to do, and those *two* days were as many as came to the share of this city, out of the few days of our Saviour's sojourning upon earth.

Secondly, We are told what impressions were made upon them by Christ's own word, and his personal converse with them (*v.* 41, 42); what he *said* and *did* there is not related, whether he healed their sick or no; but it is intimated, in the effect, that he said and did that which convinced them that he was the Christ; and the labours of a minister are best told by the good fruit of them. Their hearing of *him* had a good effect, but *now their eyes saw him;* and the effect was, 1. That their number grew (*v.* 41): *Many more believed:* many that would not be persuaded to go out of the town to him were yet wrought upon, when he came among them, to believe in him. Note, It is comfortable to see the number of believers; and sometimes the zeal and forwardness of some may be a means to

provoke many, and to stir them up to a holy emulation, Rom. xi. 14. 2. That their faith grew. Those who had been wrought upon by the report of the woman now saw cause to say, *Now we believe, not because of thy saying, v.* 42. Here are three things in which their *faith grew*:—(1.) In the matter of it, or that which they did believe. Upon the testimony of the woman, they believed him to be *a prophet*, or some extraordinary messenger from heaven; but now that they have conversed with him they believe that he is *the Christ*, the *Anointed One*, the very same that was promised to the fathers and expected by them, and that, being the *Christ*, he is the *Saviour of the world;* for the work to which he was anointed was to *save his people from their sins.* They believed him to be the Saviour not only of the Jews, but *of the world*, which they hoped would take them in, though Samaritans, for it was promised that he should be *Salvation to the ends of the earth*, Isa. xlix. 6. (2.) In the *certainty* of it; their faith now grew up to a full assurance: *We know* that this is indeed the *Christ;* αληθῶς—*truly;* not a pretended Christ, but a real one; not a *typical* Saviour, as many under the Old Testament, but *truly* one. Such an assurance as this of divine truths is what we should labour after; not only, We think it probable, and are willing to suppose that *Jesus* may be the *Christ*, but, We know that he is *indeed the Christ.* (3.) In the *ground* of it, which was a kind of spiritual sensation and experience: *Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves.* They had before *believed for her saying*, and it was well, it was a good step; but now they find *further* and much *firmer* footing for their faith: "*Now we believe* because we have *heard him ourselves*, and have heard such excellent and divine truths, accompanied with such commanding power and evidence, that we are abundantly satisfied and assured that *this is the Christ.*" This is like what the queen of Sheba said of Solomon (1 Kings x. 6, 7): The *one half was not told me.* The Samaritans, who believed for the woman's saying, now gained further light; for *to him that hath shall be given;* he that is faithful in a little shall be trusted with more. In this instance we may see how *faith comes by hearing.* [1.] Faith comes *to the birth* by hearing the *report of men.* These Samaritans, for the sake of the woman's saying, believed so far as to *come and see*, to come and make trial. Thus the instructions of parents and preachers, and the testimony of the church and our experienced neighbours, *recommend* the doctrine of Christ *to our acquaintance*, and incline us to entertain it as highly probable. But, [2.] Faith *comes to its growth*, strength, and maturity, by hearing the testimony of Christ himself; and this goes further, and recommends his doctrine *to our acceptance*, and obliges us to believe it as undoubtedly certain. We were induced to look into the scriptures *by the saying* of those who told us that in them they had found eternal life; but when we ourselves have found it in them too, have experienced the enlightening, convincing, regenerating, sanctifying, comforting, power of the word, now we believe, *not for their saying*, but because we have searched them ourselves: and our faith *stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 5; 1 John v. 9, 10.

Thus was the seed of the gospel sown in Samaria. What effect there was of this afterwards does not appear, but we find that four or five years after, when Philip preached the gospel in Samaria, he found such blessed remains of this good work now wrought that the *people with one accord gave heed to those things which Philip spoke*, Acts viii. 5, 6, 8. But as some were pliable to good so were others to evil, whom Simon Magus bewitched with his sorceries, *v.* 9, 10.

43 Now after two days he departed
thence, and went into Galilee. 44
For Jesus himself testified, that a
prophet hath no honour in his own
country. 45 Then when he was come
into Galilee, the Galilæans received
him, having seen all the things that
he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for
they also went unto the feast. 46 So
Jesus came again into Cana of Ga-
lilee, where he made the water wine.
And there was a certain nobleman,
whose son was sick at Capernaum.
47 When he heard that Jesus was
come out of Judæa into Galilee, he
went unto him, and besought him
that he would come down, and heal
his son: for he was at the point of
death. 48 Then said Jesus unto
him, Except ye see signs and won-
ders, ye will not believe. 49 The
nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come
down ere my child die. 50 Jesus
saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son
liveth. And the man believed the
word that Jesus had spoken unto
him, and he went his way. 51 And
as he was now going down, his ser-
vants met him, and told *him*, saying,
Thy son liveth. 52 Then enquired
he of them the hour when he began
to amend. And they said unto him,
Yesterday at the seventh hour the
fever left him. 53 So the father
knew that *it was* at the same hour, in
the which Jesus said unto him, Thy
son liveth: and himself believed, and

his whole house. 54 This *is* again the second miracle *that* Jesus did, when he was come out of Judæa into Galilee.

In these verses we have,

I. Christ's *coming* into Galilee, *v.* 43. Though he was as welcome among the Samaritans as he could be any where, and had better success, yet *after two days* he left them, not so much because they were Samaritans, and he would not confirm those in their prejudices against him who said, *He is a Samaritan* (*ch.* viii. 48), but because *he must preach to other cities*, Luke iv. 43. *He went into Galilee*, for there he spent much of his time. Now see here,

1. Whither Christ went; into Galilee, into the country of Galilee, but not to Nazareth, which was strictly *his own* country. He went among the villages, but declined going to Nazareth, the head city, for a reason here given, which *Jesus himself testified*, who knew the temper of his countrymen, the hearts of all men, and the experiences of all prophets, and it is this, That *a prophet has no honour in his own country*. Note, (1.) Prophets ought to have honour, because God has put honour upon them and we do or may receive benefit by them. (2.) The honour due to the Lord's prophets has very often been denied them, and contempt put upon them. (3.) This *due* honour is most frequently denied them *in their own country;* see Luke iv. 24; Matt. xiii. 57. Not that it is universally true (no rule but has some exceptions), but it holds for the most part. Joseph, when he began to be a prophet, was most hated by his brethren; David was disdained by his brother (1 Sam. xvii. 28); Jeremiah was maligned by the men of Anathoth (Jer. xi. 21), Paul by his countrymen the Jews; and Christ's near kinsmen spoke most slightly of him, *ch.* vii. 5. Men's pride and envy make them scorn to be instructed by those who once were their school-fellows and play-fellows. Desire of novelty, and of that which is far-fetched and dear-bought, and seems to drop out of the sky to them, makes them despise those persons and things which they have been long used to and know the rise of. (4.) It is a great discouragement to a minister to go among a people who have no value for him or his labours. Christ would not go to Nazareth, because he knew how little respect he should have there. (5.) It is just with God to deny his gospel to those that despise the ministers of it. They that mock the messengers forfeit the benefit of the message. Matt. xxi. 35, 41.

2. What entertainment he met with among the Galileans in the country (*v.* 45): They *received him*, bade him welcome, and cheerfully attended on his doctrine. Christ and his gospel are not sent in vain; if they have not honour with *some*, they shall have with *others*. Now the reason given why these Galileans were so ready to receive Christ is because they had seen *the miracles he did at Jerusalem*, *v.* 45. Observe, (1.) They went up to Jerusalem at the feast, the feast of the passover. The Galileans lay very remote from Jerusalem, and their way thither lay through the country of the Samaritans, which was troublesome for a Jew to pass through, worse than Baca's valley of old; yet, in obedience to God's command, they *went up to the feast*, and there they became acquainted with Christ. Note, They that are diligent and constant in attending on public ordinances some time or other meet with more spiritual benefit than they expect. (2.) At Jerusalem they *saw* Christ's miracles, which recommended him and his doctrine very much to their faith and affections. The miracles were wrought for the benefit of those at Jerusalem; yet the Galileans who were accidentally there got more advantage by them than they did for whom they were chiefly designed. Thus the word preached to a *mixed multitude* may perhaps edify *occasional* hearers more than the constant auditory.

3. What city he went to. When he would go to a city, he chose to go to Cana of Galilee, *where he had made the water wine* (*v.* 46); thither he went, to see if there were any good fruits of that miracle remaining; and, if there were, to confirm their faith, and water what he had planted. The evangelist mentions this miracle here to teach us to keep in remembrance what we *have seen* of the works of Christ.

II. His *curing* the *nobleman's son* that was sick of a fever. This story is not recorded by any other of the evangelists; it comes in Matt. iv. 23.

Observe, 1. Who the *petitioner* was, and who the *patient:* the petitioner was a *nobleman;* the patient was his son: *There was a certain nobleman. Regulus* (so the Latin), a *little king;* so called, either for the largeness of his estate, or the extent of his power, or the royalties that belonged to his manor. Some understand it as denoting his *preferment*—he was a courtier in some office about the king; others as denoting his *party*—he was an Herodian, a royalist, a prerogative-man, one that espoused the interests of the Herods, father and son; perhaps it was Chuza, Herod's steward (Luke viii. 3), or Manaen, Herod's foster-brother, Acts xiii. 1. There were saints in Cæsar's household. The father a nobleman, and yet the son sick; for dignities and titles of honour will be no security to persons and families from the assaults of sickness and death. It was fifteen miles from Capernaum where this nobleman lived to Cana, where Christ now was; yet this affliction in his family sent him so far to Christ.

2. How the petitioner made *his application* to the physician. Having heard that *Jesus was come out of* Judea to Galilee, and finding that he did not come towards Capernaum,

but turned off towards the other side of the country, he *went to him* himself, and *besought him to come and heal his son*, *v.* 47. See here, (1.) His *tender affection* to his son, that when he was sick he would spare no pains to get help for him. (2.) His *great respect* to our Lord Jesus, that he would come himself to wait upon him, when he might have sent a servant; and that he *besought him*, when, as a man in authority, some would think he might have ordered his attendance. The greatest men, when they come to God, must become beggars, and sue *sub forma pauperis —as paupers.* As to the errand he came upon, we may observe a mixture in *his faith.* [1.] There was *sincerity* in it; he did believe that Christ could heal his son, though his disease was dangerous. It is probable he had physicians to him, who had given him over; but he believed that Christ could cure him when the case seemed deplorable. [2.] Yet there was *infirmity* in his faith; he believed that Christ could heal his son, but, as it should seem, he thought he could not heal him at a distance, and therefore he besought him that he would *come down* and heal him, expecting, as Naaman did, that he would come and *strike his hand* over the patient, as if he could not cure him but by a *physical contact.* Thus we are apt to *limit the Holy One of Israel*, and to stint him to our forms. The centurion, a Gentile, a soldier, was so strong in faith as to say, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof*, Matt. viii. 8. This nobleman, a Jew, must have Christ to come down, though it was a good day's journey, and despairs of a cure unless he come down, as if he must teach Christ how to work. We are encouraged to *pray*, but we are not allowed to prescribe: Lord, heal me; but, whether with a word or a touch, *thy will be done.*

3. The gentle rebuke he met with in this address (*v.* 48): *Jesus said to him*, "I see how it is; *except you see signs and wonders, you will not believe*, as the Samaritans did, though they saw no signs and wonders, and therefore I must work miracles among you." Though he was a *nobleman*, and now in *grief* about his son, and had shown great respect to Christ in coming so far to him, yet Christ gives him a reproof. Men's dignity in the world shall not exempt them from the rebukes of the word or providence; for Christ reproves not *after the hearing of his ears*, but *with equity*, Isa. xi. 3, 4. Observe, Christ first shows him his sin and weakness, to prepare him for mercy, and then grants his request. Those whom Christ intends to honour with his *favours* he first *humbles* with his *frowns.* The *Comforter* shall first *convince.* Herod longed to see some miracle (Luke xxiii. 8), and this courtier was of the same mind, and the generality of the people too. Now that which is blamed is, (1.) That, whereas they had heard by credible and incontestable report of the miracles he had wrought in other places, they would not believe except they saw them with their own eyes, Luke iv. 23. They must be *honoured*, and they must be *humoured*, or they will not be *convinced.* Their country must be graced, and their curiosity gratified, with signs and wonders, or else, though the doctrine of Christ be sufficiently proved by miracles wrought elsewhere, they *will not believe.* Like Thomas, they will yield to no method of conviction but what they shall prescribe. (2.) That, whereas they had seen divers miracles, the evidence of which they could not gainsay, but which sufficiently proved Christ to be a teacher come from God, and should now have applied themselves to him for instruction in his doctrine, which by its native excellency would have *gently led them on*, in believing, to a spiritual perfection, instead of this they would go no further in believing than they were *driven* by signs and wonders. The *spiritual* power of the word did not *affect them*, did not *attract* them, but only the *sensible* power of miracles, which were *for those* who believe not, while *prophesying* was for *those that believe*, 1 Cor. xiv. 22. Those that admire *miracles* only, and *despise prophesying*, rank themselves with unbelievers.

4. His continued importunity in his address (*v.* 49): *Sir, come down ere my child die.* Κύριε—*Lord;* so it should be rendered. In this reply of his we have, (1.) Something that was commendable: he took the reproof patiently; he spoke to Christ respectfully. Though he was one of those that wore soft clothing, yet he could bear reproof. It is none of the privileges of peerage to be above the reproofs of the word of Christ; but it is a sign of a good temper and disposition in men, especially in great men, when they can be told of their faults and not be angry. And, as he did not take the reproof for an affront, so he did not take it for a denial, but still prosecuted his request, and continued to wrestle till he prevailed. Nay, he might argue thus: "If Christ heal *my soul*, surely he will heal *my son;* if he cure *my* unbelief, he will cure *his* fever." This is the method Christ takes, first to work *upon* us, and then to work *for* us; and there is hope if we find him entering upon this method. (2.) Something that was blameworthy, that was his infirmity; for, [1.] He seems to take no notice of the reproof Christ gave him, says nothing to it, by way either of confession or of excuse, for he is so wholly taken up with concern about his child that he can mind nothing else. Note, The sorrow of the world is a great prejudice to our profiting by the word of Christ. Inordinate care and grief are thorns that choke the good seed; see Exod. vi. 9. [2.] He still discovered the weakness of his faith in the power of Christ. *First*, He must have Christ to come down, thinking that else he could do the child no kindness. It is hard to persuade ourselves that

distance of time and place are no obstructions to the knowledge and power of our Lord Jesus; yet so it is: he sees afar off, for his *eyes run to and fro;* and he acts afar off, for his word, the word of his power, *runs very swiftly. Secondly,* He believes that Christ could heal a *sick* child, but not that he could raise a *dead* child, and therefore, "O *come down, ere my child die,*" as if then it would be too late; whereas Christ has the same power over death that he has over bodily diseases. He forgot that Elijah and Elisha had raised dead children; and is Christ's power inferior to theirs? Observe what haste he is in: *Come down, ere my child die;* as if there were danger of Christ's slipping his time. *He that believeth does not make haste,* but refers himself to Christ. "Lord, what and when and how thou pleasest."

5. The answer of peace which Christ gave to his request at last (*v.* 50): *Go thy way, thy son liveth.* Christ here gives us an instance, (1.) Of his *power,* that he not only could heal, but could heal with so much ease, without the trouble of a visit. Here is nothing *said,* nothing *done,* nothing *ordered* to be done, and yet the cure wrought: *Thy son liveth.* The healing beams of the Sun of righteousness dispense benign influences from one end of heaven to another, and *there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.* Though Christ is now in heaven, and his church on earth, he can *send from above.* This nobleman would have Christ *come down and heal his son;* Christ will heal his son, and not *come down.* And thus the cure is the sooner wrought, the nobleman's mistake rectified, and his faith confirmed; so that the thing was better done in Christ's way. When he denies what we ask, he gives what is much more to our advantage; we ask for ease, he gives patience. Observe, His power was exerted by his word. In saying, *Thy son lives,* he showed that he has *life in himself,* and power to *quicken whom he will.* Christ's saying, *Thy soul lives,* makes it alive. (2.) Of his *pity;* he observed the nobleman to be *in pain* about his son, and his natural affection discovered itself in that word, *Ere my child,* my dear child, die; and therefore Christ dropped the reproof, and gave him assurance of the recovery of his child; for he knows how a father *pities his children.*

6. The nobleman's belief of the word of Christ: He *believed,* and *went away.* Though Christ did not gratify him so far as to go down with him, he is satisfied with the method Christ took, and reckons he has gained his point. How quickly, how easily, is that which is lacking in our faith perfected by the word and power of Christ. Now he *sees no sign or wonder,* and yet *believes* the wonder done. (1.) Christ said, *Thy son liveth,* and the man *believed* him; not only believed the omniscience of Christ, that he *knew* the child had recovered, but the omnipotence of Christ, that the cure was *effected* by his word. He left him *dying;* yet, when Christ said, *He lives,* like the father of the faithful, *against hope he believed in hope,* and *staggered not through unbelief.* (2.) Christ said, *Go thy way;* and, as an evidence of the sincerity of his faith, he *went his way,* and gave neither Christ nor himself any further disturbance. He did not press Christ to come down, did not say, "If he do recover, yet a visit will be acceptable; no, he seems no further solicitous, but, like Hannah, he goes his way, and his countenance is *no more sad.* As one entirely satisfied, he made no great haste home; did not hurry home that night, but returned leisurely, as one that was perfectly easy in his own mind.

7. The further confirmation of his faith, by comparing notes with his servants at his return. (1.) His servants met him with the agreeable news of the child's recovery, *v.* 51. Probably they met him not far from his own house, and, knowing what their master's cares were, they were willing as soon as they could to make him easy. David's servants were loth to tell him when the child was dead. Christ said, *Thy son liveth;* and now the servants say the same. Good news will meet those that hope in God's word. (2.) He enquired what hour the child began to recover (*v.* 52); not as if he doubted the influence of Christ's word upon the child's recovery, but he was desirous to have his faith confirmed, that he might be able to satisfy any to whom he should mention the miracle; for it was a material circumstance. Note, [1.] It is good to furnish ourselves with all the corroborating proofs and evidences that may be, to strengthen our faith in the word of Christ, that it may grow up to *a full assurance. Show me a token for good.* [2.] The diligent comparison of the works of Christ with his word will be of great use to us for the confirming of our faith. This was the course the nobleman took: *He enquired of the servants the hour when he began to amend;* and they told him, *Yesterday at the seventh hour* (at one o'clock in the afternoon, or, as some think this evangelist reckons, at seven o'clock at night) the *fever left him;* not only he began to amend, but he was perfectly well on a sudden; so *the father knew that it was at the same hour* when Jesus said to him, *Thy son liveth.* As the word of God, well-studied, will help us to understand his providences, so the providence of God, well observed, will help us to understand his word; for God is every day *fulfilling the scripture.* Two things would help to confirm his faith:—*First,* That the child's recovery was *sudden* and not *gradual.* They name the precise time to an hour: *Yesterday,* not *about,* but *at* the seventh hour, *the fever left him;* not it *abated,* or began to *decrease,* but it *left him* in an instant. The word of Christ did not work like physic, which must have time to operate, and produce the effect, and perhaps *cures by*

expectation only; no, with Christ it was *dictum factum—he spoke and it was done;* not, He spoke and it was *set a doing. Secondly,* That it was just at the same time that Christ spoke to him: *at that very hour.* The synchronisms and coincidents of events add very much to the beauty and harmony of Providence. Observe the *time,* and the *thing* itself will be more illustrious, for every thing is beautiful *in its time;* at the very time when it is *promised,* as Israel's deliverance (Exod. xii. 41); at the very time when it is *prayed for,* as Peter's deliverance, Acts xii. 12. In men's works, distance of place is the delay of time and the retarding of business; but it is not so in the works of Christ. The pardon, and peace, and comfort, and spiritual healing, which he speaks in heaven, are, if he pleases, at the same time effected and wrought in the souls of believers; and, when these two come to be *compared* in the great day, Christ will be *glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.*

8. The *happy effect and issue of this.* The bringing of the cure to the family brought salvation to it. (1.) The nobleman *himself believed.* He had before *believed* the word of Christ, with reference to this particular occasion; but now he *believed in Christ* as the Messiah promised, and became one of his disciples. Thus the *particular* experience of the power and efficacy of *one* word of Christ may be a happy means to introduce and settle the whole authority of Christ's dominion in the soul. Christ has many ways of gaining the heart, and by the grant of a *temporal* mercy may make way for *better* things. (2.) His *whole house* believed likewise. [1.] Because of the *interest* they all had in the miracle, which preserved the *blossom* and *hopes* of the family; this affected them all, and endeared Christ to them, and recommended him to their best thoughts. [2.] Because of the *influence* the master of the family had upon them *all.* A master of a family cannot give faith to those under his charge, nor *force* them to believe, but he may be instrumental to remove *external prejudices,* which obstruct the operation of the evidence, and then the work is more than half done. *Abraham* was famous for this (Gen. xviii. 19), and Joshua, *ch.* xxiv. 15. This was a *nobleman,* and probably he had a *great household;* but, when he comes into Christ's school, he brings them all along with him. What a blessed change was here in this house, occasioned by the sickness of the child! This should reconcile us to afflictions; we know not what good may follow from them. Probably, the conversion of this *nobleman* and his family at Capernaum might induce Christ to come afterwards, and settle at Capernaum, as his head-quarters in Galilee. When great men receive the gospel, they may be instrumental to bring it to the places where they live.

9. Here is the evangelist's remark upon this cure (*v.* 54); *This is the second miracle,* referring to *ch.* ii. 11, where the turning of water into wine is said to be the first; that was soon after his first return out of Judea, this soon after his second. In Judea he had wrought many miracles, *ch.* iii. 2; iv. 45. They had the first offer; but, being driven thence, he wrought miracles in Galilee. Somewhere or other Christ will find a welcome. People may, if they please, shut the sun out of *their own houses,* but they cannot shut it *out of the world.* This is noted to be the *second* miracle, 1. To remind us of the first, wrought in the same place some months before. *Fresh* mercies should revive the remembrance of former mercies, as former mercies should encourage our hopes of further mercies. Christ keeps account of his favours, whether we do or no. 2. To let us know that *this* cure was *before* those many cures which the other evangelists mention to be wrought in Galilee, Matt. iv. 23; Mark i. 34; Luke iv. 40. Probably, the patient being a person of quality, the cure was the more talked of and sent him crowds of patients; when this nobleman applied himself to Christ, multitudes followed. What abundance of good may great men do, if they be good men!

CHAP. V.

We have in the gospels a faithful record of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, Acts i. 1. These two are interwoven, because what he taught explained what he did, and what he did confirmed what he taught. Accordingly, we have in this chapter a miracle and a sermon. I. The miracle was the cure of an impotent man that had been diseased thirty-eight years, with the circumstances of that cure, ver. 1—16. II. The sermon was Christ's vindication of himself before the sanhedrim, when he was prosecuted as a criminal for healing the man on the sabbath day, in which, 1. He asserts his authority as Messiah, and Mediator between God and man, ver. 17---29. 2. He proves it by the testimony of his Father, of John Baptist, of his miracles, and of the scriptures of the Old Testament, and condemns the Jews for their unbelief, ver. 30—47.

AFTER this there was a feast
of the Jews; and Jesus went
up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is
at Jerusalem by the sheep *market* a
pool, which is called in the Hebrew
tongue Bethesda, having five porches.
3 In these lay a great multitude of
impotent folk, of blind, halt, wi-
thered, waiting for the moving of the
water. 4 For an angel went down
at a certain season into the pool, and
troubled the water: whosoever then
first after the troubling of the water
stepped in was made whole of what-
soever disease he had. 5 And a cer-
tain man was there, which had an
infirmity thirty and eight years.
6 When Jesus saw him lie, and
knew that he had been now a long
time *in that case,* he saith unto him,
Wilt thou be made whole? 7 The
impotent man answered him, Sir, I

have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming another stepeth down before me. 8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. 10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed. 11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. 12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? 13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place. 14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. 15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. 16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

This miraculous cure is not recorded by any other of the evangelists, who confine themselves mostly to the miracles wrought in Galilee, but John relates those wrought at Jerusalem. Concerning this observe,

I. *The time when* this cure was wrought: it was at a *feast of the Jews*, that is, the passover, for that was the most celebrated feast. Christ, though residing in Galilee, yet *went up to Jerusalem* at the feast, *v.* 1. 1. Because it was an *ordinance of God*, which, as a *subject*, he would observe, being made under the law; though as a *Son* he might have pleaded an exemption. Thus he would teach us to attend religious assemblies. Heb. x. 25. 2. Because it was an *opportunity of good;* for, (1.) there were great numbers gathered together there at that time; it was a general rendezvous, at least of all serious thinking people, from all parts of the country, besides proselytes from other nations: and Wisdom must *cry in the places of concourse*, Prov. i. 21. (2.) It was to be hoped that they were in a *good frame*, for they came together to *worship God* and to spend their time in religious exercises. Now a mind *inclined to devotion*, and sequestering itself to the exercises of piety, *lies very open* to the further discoveries of divine light and love and to it Christ will be acceptable.

II. The *place where* this cure was wrought: at the *pool of Bethesda*, which had a miraculous healing virtue in it, and is here particularly described, *v.* 2—4.

1. Where it was situated: *At Jerusalem, by the sheep-market;* ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ. It might as well be rendered the *sheep-cote*, where the sheep were kept, or the *sheep-gate*, which we read of, Neh. iii. 1, through which the sheep were *brought*, as the *sheep-market*, where they were *sold*. Some think it was near the temple, and, if so, it yielded a melancholy but profitable spectacle to those that went up to the temple to pray.

2. How it was called: It was a *pool* (a pond or bath), *which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda—the house of mercy;* for therein appeared much of the *mercy of God* to the sick and diseased. In a world of so much misery as this is, it is well that there are some *Bethesdas—houses of mercy* (remedies against those maladies), that the scene is not all melancholy. An *alms-house*, so Dr. Hammond. Dr. Lightfoot's conjecture is that this was the *upper pool* (Isa. vii. 3), and the *old pool*, Isa. xxii. 11; that it had been used for *washing* from ceremonial pollutions, for convenience of which the porches were built to dress and undress in, but it was lately become medicinal.

3. How it was fitted up: It had *five porches, cloisters, piazzas*, or *roofed walks*, in which the sick lay. Thus the charity of men concurred with the mercy of God for the relief of the distressed. Nature has provided *remedies*, but men must provide *hospitals*.

4. How it was frequented with sick and cripples (*v.* 3): *In these lay a great multitude of impotent folks.* How many are the afflictions of the afflicted in this world! How full of complaints are all places, and what multitudes of impotent folks! It may do us good to visit the hospitals sometimes, that we may take occasion, from the calamities of others, to thank God for our comforts. The evangelist specifies three sorts of diseased people that lay here, *blind, halt*, and *withered* or *sinew-shrunk*, either in one particular part, as the man with the *withered hand*, or all over paralytic. These are mentioned because, being least able to help themselves into the water, they lay longest waiting in the *porches*. Those that were sick of these bodily diseases took the pains to come *far* and had the patience to wait *long* for a cure; any of us would have done the same, and we ought to do so: but O that men were as wise for their souls, and as solicitous to get their spiritual diseases healed! We are all by nature *impotent folks* in spiritual things, *blind, halt*, and *withered;* but effectual provision is made for our cure if we will but observe orders.

5. What virtue it had for the cure of these impotent folks (*v.* 4). *An angel went down*, and *troubled the water;* and *whoso first step-*

ped in was made whole. That this strange virtue in the pool was *natural*, or *artificial* rather, and was the effect of the washing of the sacrifices, which impregnated the water with I know not what healing virtue even for *blind* people, and that the angel was a *messenger*, a common person, sent down to stir the water, is altogether groundless; there was a room in the temple on purpose to wash the sacrifices in. Expositors generally agree that the virtue this pool had was supernatural. It is true the Jewish writers, who are not sparing in recounting the praises of Jerusalem, do none of them make the least mention of this *healing pool*, of which silence in this matter perhaps this is the reason, that it was taken for a presage of the near approach of the Messiah, and therefore those who denied him to be come industriously concealed such an indication of his coming; so that this is all the account we have of it. Observe,

(1.) The *preparation* of the medicine by an angel, who *went down into the pool*, and *stirred the water*. Angels are God's servants, and friends to mankind; and perhaps are more active in the removing of diseases (as evil angels in the inflicting of them) than we are aware of. Raphael, the apocryphal name of an angel, signifies *medicina Dei—God's physic*, or *physician* rather. See what mean offices the holy angels condescend to, for the good of men. If we would do the will of God as the angels do it, we must think nothing below us but sin. The *troubling of the water* was the signal given of the descent of the angel, as the *going upon the tops of the mulberry trees* was to David, and then they must *bestir themselves*. The waters of the sanctuary are then *healing* when they are put in *motion*. Ministers must *stir up the gift* that is in them. When they are cold and dull in their ministrations, the waters *settle* and are not apt to *heal*. The angel descended, to *stir the water*, not daily, perhaps not frequently, but *at a certain season*; some think, at the three solemn feasts, to grace those solemnities; or, *now and then*, as Infinite Wisdom saw fit. God is a free agent in dispensing his favours.

(2.) The *operation* of the medicine: *Whoever first stepped in was made whole.* Here is, [1.] a miraculous extent of the virtue as to the *diseases* cured; what disease soever it was, this water cured it. Natural and artificial baths are as *hurtful* in some cases as they are useful in others, but this was a remedy for every malady, even for those that came from contrary causes. The power of miracles *succeeds* where the power of nature *succumbs*. [2.] A miraculous limitation of the virtue as to the *persons* cured: He that first stepped in had the benefit; that is, he or they that stepped in immediately were cured, not those that lingered and came in afterwards. This teaches us to observe and improve our opportunities, and to *look about us*, that we slip not a season which may never return. The angel *stirred* the waters, but left the diseased to themselves to *get in*. God has put virtue into the scriptures and ordinances, for he would have healed us; but, if we do not a make a due improvement of them, it is our own fault, we *would not be healed*.

Now this is all the account we have of this *standing* miracle; it is uncertain when it began and when it ceased. Some conjecture it began when Eliashib the high priest began the building of the wall about Jerusalem, and sanctified it with prayer; and that God testified his acceptance by putting this virtue into the adjoining pool. Some think it began now lately at Christ's birth; nay, others at his baptism. Dr. Lightfoot, finding in *Josephus, Antiq.* lib. xv. cap. 7, mention of a great earthquake in the seventh year of Herod, thirty years before Christ's birth, supposed, since there used to be earthquakes at the descent of angels, that then the angel first descended to stir this water. Some think it ceased with this miracle, others at Christ's death; however, it is certain it had a gracious signification. *First*, it was a *token* of God's good will to that people, and an indication that, though they had been long without prophets and miracles, yet God had not *cast them off*; though they were now an oppressed despised people, and many were ready to say, *Where are all the wonders that our fathers told us of?* God did hereby let them know that he had still a kindness for the *city of their solemnities*. We may hence take occasion to acknowledge with thankfulness God's power and goodness in the mineral waters, that contribute so much to the health of mankind; for God *made the fountains of water*, Rev. xiv. 7. *Secondly*, It was a type of the Messiah, who is the *fountain opened*; and was intended to raise people's expectations of him who is the *Sun of righteousness*, that arises *with healing under his wings*. These waters had formerly been used for purifying, now for healing, to signify both the *cleansing* and *curing* virtue of the blood of Christ, that incomparable bath, which *heals all our diseases*. The waters of Siloam, which filled this pool, signified the kingdom of David, and of Christ the Son of David (Isa. viii. 6); fitly therefore have they now this *sovereign* virtue put into them. The laver of regeneration is to us as Bethesda's pool, healing our spiritual diseases; not at certain seasons, but at all times. *Whoever will, let him come.*

III. The patient on whom this cure was wrought (*v.* 5): one that *had been infirm thirty-eight years*. 1. His *disease* was *grievous*: He had an *infirmity*, a weakness; he had lost the use of his limbs, at least on one side, as is usual in palsies. It is sad to have the body so disabled that, instead of being the soul's instrument, it is become, even in the affairs of this life, its burden. What reason have we to thank God for bodily

strength, to use it for him, and to pity those who are *his prisoners!* 2. The *duration* of it was *tedious: Thirty-eight years.* He was lame longer than most live. Many are so long disabled for the offices of life that, as the psalmist complains, they seem to be *made in vain;* for suffering, not for service; born to be always dying. Shall we complain of one wearisome night, or one fit of illness, who perhaps for many years have scarcely known what it has been to be a day sick, when many others, better than we, have scarcely known what it has been to be a day well? Mr. Baxter's note on this passage is very affecting: "How great a mercy was it to live thirty-eight years under God's wholesome discipline! O my God, saith he, "I thank thee for the like discipline of fifty-eight years; how safe a life is this, in comparison of full prosperity and pleasure!"

IV. The cure and the circumstances of it briefly related, *v.* 6—9.

1. *Jesus saw him lie.* Observe, When Christ came up to Jerusalem he visited not the palaces, but the hospitals, which is an instance of his humility, and condescension, and tender compassion, and an *indication* of his great design in coming into the world, which was to seek and save the sick and wounded. There was a great multitude of poor cripples here at Bethesda, but Christ fastened his eye upon this one, and singled him out from the rest, because he was *senior* of the house, and in a more deplorable condition than any of the rest; and Christ delights to help the helpless, and hath mercy *on whom he will have mercy.* Perhaps his companions in tribulation insulted over him, because he had often been disappointed of a cure; therefore Christ took him for his patient: it is his honour to side with the weakest, and bear up those whom he sees *run down.*

2. He knew and considered *how long he had lain* in this condition. Those that have been long in affliction may comfort themselves with this, that God keeps account *how long,* and knows our frame.

3. He asked him, *Wilt thou be made whole?* A strange question to be asked one that had been so long ill. Some indeed would not be made whole, because their sores serve them to beg by and serve them for an excuse for idleness; but this poor man was as unable to *go a begging* as to *work,* yet Christ put it to him, (1.) To *express* his own pity and concern for him. Christ is tenderly inquisitive concerning the desires of those that are in affliction, and is willing to know *what is their petition:* "What shall I do for you?" (2.) To try him whether he would be beholden for a cure to him against whom the great people were so prejudiced and sought to prejudice others. (3.) To teach him to value the mercy, and to excite in him desires after it. In spiritual cases, people are not willing to be cured of their sins, are loth to part with them. If this point therefore were but gained, if people were willing to be *made whole,* the work were half done, for Christ is willing to heal, if we be but willing to be healed, Matt. viii. 3.

4. The poor impotent man takes this opportunity to renew his complaint, and to set forth the misery of his case, which makes his cure the more illustrious: *Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool, v.* 7. He seems to take Christ's question as an imputation of carelessness and neglect: "If thou hadst had a mind to be healed, thou wouldest have looked better to thy hits, and have got into the healing waters long before now." "No, Master," saith the poor man, "it is not for want of a *good will,* but of a *good friend,* that I am unhealed. I have done what I could to help myself, but in vain, for no one else will help me." (1.) He does not think of any other way of being cured than by these waters, and desires no other friendship than to be helped into *them;* therefore, when Christ cured him, his imagination or expectation could not contribute to it, for he thought of no such thing. (2.) He complains for want of friends to help him in: "*I have no man,* no friend to do me that kindness." One would think that some of those who had been themselves healed should have lent him a hand; but it is common for the poor to be destitute of friends; *no man careth for their soul.* To the sick and impotent it is as true a piece of charity to work for them as to relieve them; and thus the poor are capable of being charitable to one another, and ought to be so, though we seldom find that they are so; I speak it to their shame. (3.) He bewails his infelicity, that very often when *he* was coming *another stepped in before him.* But a step between him and a cure, and yet he continues impotent. None had the charity to say, "Your case is worse than mine, do you go in now, and I will stay till the next time; for there is no getting over the old maxim, *Every one for himself.* Having been so often disappointed, he begins to despair, and now is Christ's time to come to his relief; he delights to help in desperate cases. Observe, How mildly this man speaks of the unkindness of those about him, without any peevish reflections. As we should be thankful for the least kindness, so we should be patient under the greatest contempts; and, let our resentments be ever so *just,* yet our expressions should ever be *calm.* And observe further, to his praise, that, though he had waited so long in vain, yet still he continued lying by the pool-side, hoping that some time or other help would come, Hab. ii. 3.

5. Our Lord Jesus hereupon cures him with a word speaking, though he neither asked it nor thought of it. Here is,

(1.) The word he said: *Rise, take up thy bed, v.* 8. [1.] He is bidden to *rise and walk;* a strange command to be given to an *impotent* man, that had been long disabled; but this divine word was to be the vehicle of a divine power; it was a command to the disease to *be*

gone, to nature to *be strong*, but it is expressed as a command to him to *bestir himself*. He must *rise and walk*, that is, attempt to do it, and in the *essay* he should receive strength to do it. The conversion of a sinner is the cure of a chronic disease; this is ordinarily done by the word, a word of command: Arise, and walk; *turn, and live; make ye a new heart;* which no more supposes a power in us to do it, without the grace of God, *distinguishing* grace, than this supposed such a power in the impotent man. But, if he had not attempted to help himself, he had not been cured, and he must have *borne the blame;* yet it does not therefore follow that, when he did rise and walk, it was by his own strength; no, it was by the power of Christ, and he must have all the glory. Observe, Christ did not bid him rise and go into the waters, but *rise and walk*. Christ did that for us which the law could not do, and set that aside. [2.] He is bidden to *take up his bed. First*, To make it to appear that it was a *perfect cure*, and purely miraculous; for he did not recover strength by degrees, but from the extremity of weakness and impotency he suddenly stepped into the highest degree of bodily strength; so that he was able to carry as great a load as any porter that had been as long *used* to it as he had been *disused*. He, who this minute was not able to turn himself in his bed, the next minute was able to carry his bed. The man sick of the palsy (Matt. ix. 6) was bidden to *go to his house*, but probably this man had no house to go to, the hospital was his home; therefore he is bidden to *rise and walk*. *Secondly*, It was to *proclaim* the cure, and make it public; for, being the sabbath day, whoever carried a burden through the streets made himself very remarkable, and every one would enquire what was the meaning of it; thereby notice of the miracle would spread, to the honour of God. *Thirdly*, Christ would thus witness against the tradition of the elders, which had stretched the law of the sabbath beyond its intention; and would likewise show that he was *Lord of the sabbath*, and had power to make what alterations he pleased about it, and to over-rule the law. Joshua, and the host of Israel, marched about Jericho on the sabbath day, when God commanded them; so did this man carry his bed, in obedience to a command. The case may be such that it may become a work of *necessity*, or *mercy*, to carry a bed on the sabbath day; but here it was more, it was a work of *piety*, being designed purely for the glory of God. *Fourthly*, He would hereby try the faith and obedience of his patient. By carrying his bed publicly, he exposed himself to the censure of the ecclesiastical court, and was liable, at least, to be *scourged in the synagogue*. Now, will he run the hazard of this, in obedience to Christ? Yes, he will. Those that have been *healed by Christ's word* should be *ruled by his word*, whatever it cost them.

(2.) The efficacy of this word (*v.* 9): a divine power went along with it, and immediately he was *made whole, took up his bed, and walked*. [1.] He felt the power of Christ's word healing him: *Immediately he was made whole*. What a joyful surprise was this to the poor cripple, to find himself all of a sudden so easy, so strong, so able to help himself! What a new world was he in, in an instant! Nothing is too hard for Christ to do. [2.] He obeyed the power of Christ's word commanding him. He *took up his bed and walked*, and did not care who blamed him or threatened him for it. The proof of our spiritual cure is our rising and walking. Hath Christ healed our spiritual diseases? Let us go whithersoever he sends us, and *take up* whatever he is pleased to lay upon us, and *walk before him*.

V. What became of the poor man after he was cured. We are here told,

1. What passed between him and the Jews who saw him carry his bed on the sabbath day; for on that day this cure was wrought, and it was the sabbath that fell within the passover week, and therefore a *high day, ch.* xix. 31. Christ's work was such that he needed not make any difference between sabbath days and other days, for he was always about his Father's business; but he wrought many remarkable cures on that day, perhaps to encourage his church to expect those spiritual favours from him, in their observance of the Christian sabbath, which were typified by his miraculous cures. Now here,

(1.) The Jews quarrelled with the man for carrying his bed on the sabbath day, telling him that *it was not lawful, v.* 10. It does not appear whether they were magistrates, who had power to *punish* him, or common people, who could only *inform* against him; but thus far was commendable, that, while they knew not by *what authority* he did it, they were jealous for the honour of the sabbath, and could not unconcernedly see it *profaned;* like Nehemiah. Neh. xiii. 17.

(2.) The man justified himself in what he did by a warrant that would bear him out, *v.* 11. "I do not do it in contempt of the law and the sabbath, but in obedience to one who, by *making me whole*, has given me an undeniable proof that he is greater than either. He that could work such a miracle as to *make me whole* no doubt might give me such a command as to carry *my bed;* he that could overrule the powers of nature no doubt might overrule a positive law, especially in an instance not of the essence of the law. He that was so kind as to make me whole would not be so unkind as to bid me do what is sinful." Christ, by curing another paralytic, proved his power to *forgive sin*, here to *give law;* if his pardons are valid, his edicts are so, and his miracles prove both.

(3.) The Jews enquired further who it was that gave him this warrant (*v.* 12): *What*

man is that? Observe, How industriously they *overlooked* that which might be a ground of their *faith in Christ.* They enquire not, no, not for curiosity, "Who is it that *made thee whole?*" While they industriously caught at that which might be a ground of reflection upon Christ *(What man is* it who said unto thee, *Take up thy bed?)* they would fain *subpœna* the patient to be witness against his physician, and to be his betrayer. In their question, observe, [1.] They resolve to look upon Christ as a *mere man: What man is that?* For, though he gave ever such convincing proofs of it, they were resolved that they would never own him to be the *Son of God.* [2.] They resolve to look upon him as a bad *man,* and take it for granted that he who bade this man carry his bed, whatever divine commission he might *produce,* was certainly a delinquent, and as such they resolve to prosecute him. *What man is that* who durst give such orders?

(4.) The poor man was unable to give them any account of him: *He wist not who he was, v.* 13.

[1.] Christ was *unknown* to him when he healed him. Probably he had heard of the name of Jesus, but had never seen him, and therefore could not tell that this was he. Note, Christ does many a good turn for those that know him not, Isa. xlv. 4, 5. He enlightens, strengthens, quickens, comforts us, and we *wist not who he is;* nor are aware how much we receive daily by his mediation. This man, being unacquainted with Christ, could not actually believe in him for a cure; but Christ knew the dispositions of his soul, and suited his favours to them, as to the blind man in a like case, *ch.* ix. 36. Our covenant and communion with God take rise, not so much from our knowledge of him, as from his knowledge of us. We *know God,* or, rather, are *known of him,* Gal. iv. 9.

[2.] For the present he *kept himself unknown;* for as soon as he had wrought the cure he *conveyed himself away,* he *made himself unknown* (so some read it), *a multitude being in that place.* This is mentioned to show, either, *First, How* Christ conveyed himself away—by retiring into the crowd, so as not to be distinguished from a common person. He that was the chief of ten thousand often made himself one of the throng. It is sometimes the lot of those who have by their services signalized themselves to be levelled with the multitude, and overlooked. Or, *Secondly, Why* he conveyed himself away, because there was *a multitude* there, and he industriously avoided both the *applause* of those who would admire the miracle and *cry that up,* and the censure of those who would censure him as a sabbath-breaker, and *run him down.* Those that are active for God in their generation must expect to pass through *evil report* and *good report;* and it is wisdom as much as may be to keep out of the hearing of both; lest by the one we be *exalted,* and by the other *depressed,* above measure. Christ left the miracle to commend itself, and the man on whom it was wrought to justify it.

2. What passed between him and our Lord Jesus at their next interview, *v.* 14. Observe here,

(1.) Where Christ found him: *in the temple,* the place of public worship. In our attendance on public worship we may expect to meet with Christ, and improve our acquaintance with him. Observe, [1.] Christ *went to the temple.* Though he had many enemies, yet he appeared in public, because there he bore his testimony to divine institutions, and had opportunity of doing good. [2.] The man that was cured *went to the temple.* There Christ found him the same day, as it should seem, that he was healed; thither he straightway went, *First,* Because he had, *by his infirmity,* been so long *detained* thence. Perhaps he had not been there for thirty-eight years, and therefore, as soon as ever the embargo is taken off, his first visit shall be to the temple, as Hezekiah intimates his shall be (Isa. xxxviii. 22): *What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord? Secondly,* Because he had *by his recovery* a good errand thither; he went up to the temple to return thanks to God for his recovery. When God has at any time restored us our health we ought to attend him with solemn praises (Ps. cxvi. 18, 19), and the sooner the better, while the sense of the mercy is fresh. *Thirdly,* Because he had, by *carrying his bed,* seemed to put a contempt on the sabbath, he would thus show that he had an honour for it, and made conscience of sabbath-sanctification, in that on which the chief stress of it is laid, which is the *public worship* of God. Works of necessity and mercy are allowed; but when they are over we must *go to the temple.*

(2.) What he said to him. When Christ has cured us, he has not done with us; he now applies himself to the healing of his soul, and this *by the word* too. [1.] He gives him a *memento* of his cure: *Behold thou art made whole.* He found himself made whole, yet Christ calls his attention to it. *Behold, consider* it seriously, how sudden, how strange, how cheap, how easy, the cure was: *admire it;* behold, and wonder: *remember it;* let the impressions of it abide, and never be lost, Isa. xxxviii. 9. [2.] He gives him a caution against sin, in consideration hereof, *Being made whole, sin no more.* This implies that his disease was the punishment of sin; whether of some remarkably flagrant sin, or only of sin in general, we cannot tell, but we know that sin is the procuring cause of sickness, Ps. cvii. 17, 18. Some observe that Christ did not make mention of sin to any of his patients, except to this *impotent* man, and another who was in like manner diseased, Mark ii. 5. While those chronical diseases

lasted, they prevented the outward acts of many sins, and therefore watchfulness was the more necessary when the disability was removed. Christ intimates that those who are *made whole*, who are eased of the present sensible punishment of sin, are in danger of *returning* to sin when the terror and restraint are over, unless divine grace dry up the fountain. When the trouble which only dammed up the current is over, the waters will return to their old course; and therefore there is great need of watchfulness, lest after healing mercy we return again to folly. The *misery* we were *made whole from* warns us to sin no more, having felt the smart of sin; the *mercy* we were *made whole by* is an engagement upon us not to offend him who healed us. This is the voice of every providence, *Go and sin no more.* This man began his new life very hopefully *in the temple*, yet Christ saw it necessary to give him this caution; for it is common for people, when they are sick, to *promise much*, when newly recovered to *perform something*, but after awhile to *forget all.* [3.] He gives him warning of his danger, in case he should return to his former sinful course: *Lest a worse thing come to thee.* Christ, who knows all men's hearts, knew that he was one of those that must be *frightened* from sin. Thirty-eight years' lameness, one would think, was a thing bad enough; yet there is something *worse* that will come to him if he relapse into sin after God has *given him such a deliverance* as this, Ezra ix. 13, 14. The hospital where he lay was a melancholy place, but hell is much more so: the doom of apostates is a worse thing than thirty-eight years' lameness.

VI. Now, after this interview between Christ and his patient, observe in the two following verses, 1. The notice which the poor simple man gave to the Jews concerning Christ, *v.* 15. He told them it was Jesus that had *made him whole.* We have reason to think that he intended this for the honour of Christ and the benefit of the Jews, little thinking that he who had so much power and goodness could have *any* enemies; but those who wish well to Christ's kingdom must have the *wisdom of the serpent*, lest they do more hurt than good with their zeal, and must not cast pearls before swine. 2. The rage and enmity of the Jews against him: *Therefore did the* rulers of the Jews *persecute Jesus.* See, (1.) How absurd and unreasonable their enmity to Christ was. *Therefore*, because he had made a poor sick man well, and so eased the public charge, upon which, it is likely, he had subsisted; *therefore* they persecuted him, because he did good in Israel. (2.) How bloody and cruel it was: *They sought to slay him;* nothing less than his blood, his life, would satisfy them. (3.) How it was varnished over with a colour of zeal for the honour of the sabbath; for this was the pretended crime, *Because he had done these things on the sabbath day*, as if that circumstance were enough to vitiate the best and most divine actions, and to render *him* obnoxious whose deeds were otherwise most meritorious. Thus hypocrites often cover their real enmity against the *power* of godliness with a pretended zeal for the *form* of it.

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. 19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. 20 For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. 21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them;* even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. 22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the

resurrection of damnation. 30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

We have here Christ's discourse upon occasion of his being accused as a sabbath-breaker, and it seems to be his vindication of himself before the sanhedrim, when he was arraigned before them: whether on the same day, or two or three days after, does not appear; probably the same day. Observe,

I. The doctrine laid down, by which he justified what he did on the sabbath day (*v.* 17): *He answered them.* This supposes that he had something laid to his charge: or what they suggested one to another, when they sought to slay him (*v.* 16), he *knew*, and gave this reply to, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* At other times, in answer to the like charge, he had pleaded the example of David's eating the show-bread, of the priests' slaying the sacrifices, and of the people's watering their cattle on the sabbath day; but here he goes higher and alleges the example of his Father and his divine authority; waiving all other pleas, he insists upon that which was *instar omnium—equivalent to the whole*, and abides by it, which he had mentioned, Matt. xii. 8. *The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day;* but he here enlarges on it. 1. He pleads that he was the *Son of God*, plainly intimated in his calling *God his Father;* and, if so, his holiness was *unquestionable* and his sovereignty *incontestable;* and he might make what alterations he pleased of the divine law. *Surely they will reverence the Son*, the heir of all things. 2. That he was a worker together with God. (1.) *My Father worketh hitherto.* The example of God's resting on the seventh day from all his work is, in the fourth commandment, made the ground of our observing it as a *sabbath* or *day of rest.* Now God rested only from such work as he had done the six days before; otherwise he *worketh hitherto*, he is every day working, sabbath days and week-days; upholding and governing all the creatures, and concurring by his common providence to all the motions and operations of nature, *to his own glory;* therefore, when we are appointed to rest on the sabbath day, yet we are not restrained from doing that which has a direct tendency *to the glory of God*, as the man's carrying his bed had. (2.) *I work;* not only therefore I *may* work, *like him*, in doing good on sabbath days as well as other days, but I also *work with him.* As God created all things by Christ, so he supports and governs all by him, Heb. i. 3. This sets what he does above all exception; he that is so great a worker must needs be an uncontrollable governor; he that does all is Lord of all, and therefore *Lord of the sabbath*, which particular branch of his authority he would now assert, because he was shortly to show it further, in the change of the day from the seventh to the first.

II. The offence that was taken at his doctrine (*v.* 18): *The Jews sought the more to kill him.* His defence was made his offence, as if by justifying himself he had made bad worse. Note, Those that will not be enlightened by the word of Christ will be enraged and exasperated by it, and nothing more vexes the enemies of Christ than his asserting his authority; see Ps. ii. 3—5. They sought to kill him,

1. Because he had broken the sabbath; for, let him say what he would in his own justification, they are resolved, right or wrong, to *find him guilty* of sabbath breaking. When malice and envy sit upon the bench, reason and justice may even be silent at the bar, for whatever they can say will undoubtedly be over-ruled.

2. Not only so, but he had said also *that God was his Father.* Now they pretend a jealousy for *God's honour*, as before for the sabbath day, and charge Christ with it as a heinous crime that he made himself equal with God; and a heinous crime it had been if he had not really been so. It was the sin of Lucifer, *I will be like the Most High.* Now, (1.) This was justly inferred from what he said, that he was the *Son of God*, and that God was *his Father*, πατέρα ἴδιον—*his own Father;* his, so as he was no one's else. He had said that he worked with his Father, by the same authority and power, and hereby he made himself equal with God. *Ecce intelligunt Judæi, quod non intelligunt Ariani—Behold, the Jews understand what the Arians do not.* (2.) Yet it was unjustly imputed to him as an offence that he equalled himself with God, for he was and is God, equal with the Father (Phil. ii. 6); and therefore Christ, in answer to this charge, does not except against the innuendo as strained or forced, makes out his claim and proves that he is equal with God in power and glory.

III. Christ's discourse upon this occasion, which continues without interruption to the end of the chapter. In these verses he explains, and afterwards confirms, his commission, as Mediator and plenipotentiary in the treaty between God and man. And, as the honours he is hereby *entitled to* are such as it is not fit for any creature to receive, so the work he is hereby entrusted with is such as it is not possible for any creature to go through with, and therefore he is God, equal with the Father.

1. *In general.* He is one with the Father in all he does as Mediator, and there was a perfectly good understanding between them in the whole matter. It is ushered in with a solemn preface (*v.* 19): *Verily, verily, I say unto you;* I the Amen, the Amen, say it. This intimates that the things declared are, (1.) Very awful and great, and such as should

command the most serious attention. (2.) Very sure, and such as should command an unfeigned assent. (3.) That they are matters purely of divine revelation; things which Christ has told us, and which we could not otherwise have come to the knowledge of. Two things he saith in general concerning the Son's oneness with the Father in working:—

[1.] That the Son *conforms to the Father* (*v.* 19): *The Son can do nothing of himself but what he sees the Father do;* for *these things does the Son.* The Lord Jesus, as Mediator, is, *First, Obedient to his Father's will;* so entirely obedient that he *can do nothing of himself,* in the same sense as it is said, *God cannot* lie, *cannot deny* himself, which expresses the perfection of his truth, not any imperfection in his strength; so here, Christ was so entirely devoted to his Father's will that it was impossible for him in any thing to act separately. *Secondly,* He is *observant of his Father's counsel;* he can, he will, do nothing *but what he sees the Father do.* No man can *find out the work of God,* but the only-begotten Son, who lay in his bosom, sees what he does, is intimately acquainted with his purposes, and has the plan of them ever before him. What he did as Mediator, throughout his whole undertaking, was the exact transcript or counterpart of what the Father did; that is, what he designed, when he formed the plan of our redemption in his eternal counsels, and settled those measures in every thing which never could be *broken,* nor ever needed to be *altered.* It was the copy of that *great original;* it was Christ's faithfulness, as it was Moses's, that he did all *according to the pattern shown him in the mount.* This is expressed in the present tense, what he *sees the Father do,* for the same reason that, when he was here upon earth, it was said, He *is* in heaven (*ch.* iii. 13), and *is* in the bosom of the Father (*ch.* i. 18); as he was even then by his divine nature present in heaven, so the things done in heaven were *present* to his knowledge. What the Father did in his counsels, the Son had ever in his view, and still he had his eye upon it, as David in spirit spoke of him, *I have set the Lord always before me,* Ps. xvi. 8. *Thirdly,* Yet he is *equal* with the Father in *working;* for *what things soever* the Father does *these also does the Son likewise;* he did the *same* things, not *such* things, but *ταῦτα,* the *same* things; and he did them in the *same manner, ὁμοίως likewise,* with the same authority, and liberty, and wisdom, the same energy and efficacy. Does the Father enact, repeal, and alter, positive laws? Does he over-rule the course of nature, know men's hearts? So does the Son. The power of the Mediator is a divine power.

[2.] That the Father *communicates* to the Son, *v.* 20. Observe,

First, The inducement to it: *The Father loveth the Son;* he declared, *This is my beloved Son.* He had not only a good will to the undertaking, but an infinite complacency in the undertaker. Christ was now hated of men, one whom the nation abhorred (Isa. xlix. 7); but he comforted himself with this, that his Father loved him.

Secondly, The instances of it. He shows it, 1. In what he *does* communicate to him: *He shows him all things that himself doth.* The Father's measures in making and ruling the world are shown to the Son, that he may take the same measures in framing and governing the church, which work was to be a duplicate of the work of creation and providence, and it is therefore called *the world to come.* He shows him all things *ἃ αὐτὸς ποιεῖ—which he does,* that is, which the *Son* does, so it might be construed; all that the Son does is by direction from the Father; he *shows* him. 2. In what he *will* communicate; he will *show him,* that is, will appoint and direct him to do *greater works than these.* (1.) Works of greater *power* than the *curing of the impotent man;* for he should raise the dead, and should himself rise from the dead. By the power of nature, with the use of means, a disease may possibly in time be cured; but nature can never, by the use of any means, in any time raise the dead. (2.) Works of greater *authority* than warranting the man to *carry his bed on the sabbath day.* They thought this a daring attempt; but what was this to his abrogating the whole ceremonial law, and instituting new ordinances, which he would shortly do, "*that you may marvel!*" Now they looked upon his works with contempt and indignation, but he will shortly do that which they will look upon with amazement, Luke vii. 16. Many are brought to marvel at Christ's works, whereby he has the honour of them, who are not brought to believe, by which they would have the benefit of them.

2. *In particular.* He proves his equality with the Father, by specifying some of those works which he does that are the peculiar works of God. This is enlarged upon, *v.* 21—30. He does, and shall do, that which is the peculiar work of God's almighty power—*raising the dead* and *giving life, v.* 21, 25, 26, 28. He does, and shall do, that which is the peculiar work of God's sovereign dominion and jurisdiction—*judging* and *executing judgment, v.* 22—24, 27. These two are interwoven, as being nearly connected; and what is said once is repeated and inculcated; put both together, and they will prove that Christ said not amiss when he made himself *equal with God.*

(1.) Observe what is here said concerning the Mediator's power to *raise the dead* and *give life.* See [1.] His *authority* to do it (*v.* 21): *As the Father raiseth up the dead,* so *the Son quickeneth whom he will. First,* It is God's prerogative to raise the dead, and give life, even his who first *breathed* into man the *breath of life,* and so made him a *living soul;* see Deut. xxxii. 39; 1 Sam. ii. 6; Ps. lxviii 20; Rom. iv. 17. This God had done by the

prophets Elijah and Elisha, and it was a confirmation of their mission. A *resurrection from the dead* never lay in the common road of nature, nor ever fell within the thought of those that studied only the compass of nature's power, one of whose received axioms was point blank against it: *A privatione ad habitum non datur regressus—Existence, when once extinguished, cannot be rekindled.* It was therefore ridiculed at Athens as an *absurd* thing, Acts xvii. 32. It is purely the work of a divine power, and the knowledge of it purely by divine revelation. This the Jews would own. *Secondly*, The Mediator is invested with this prerogative: *He quickens whom he will;* raises to life whom he pleases, and when he pleases. He does not enliven things by natural necessity, as the sun does, whose beams revive of course; but he acts as a free agent, has the dispensing of his power in his own hand, and is never either *con*strained, or *re*strained, in the use of it. As he has the power, so he has the wisdom and sovereignty, of a God; has the *key of the grave and of death* (Rev. i. 18), not as a servant, to open and shut as he is bidden, for he has it as the *key of David,* which he is master of, Rev. iii. 7. An absolute prince is described by this (Dan. v. 19): *Whom he would he slew or kept alive;* it is true of Christ without hyperbole.

[2.] His *ability* to do it. *Therefore* he has power to quicken whom he will as the Father does, because *he has life in himself, as the Father has, v.* 26. *First,* It is certain that the Father *has life in himself.* Not only he is a *self-existent* Being, who does not derive from, or depend upon, any other (Exod. iii. 14), but he is a sovereign giver of life; he has the disposal of life in himself; and of all good (for so *life* sometimes signifies); it is all derived from him, and dependent on him. He is to his creatures the fountain of life, and all good; author of their being and well-being; the living God, and the God of all living. *Secondly,* It is as certain that he has *given to the Son to have life in himself.* As the Father is the original of all natural life and good, being the great Creator, so the Son, as Redeemer, is the original of all spiritual life and good; is that to the church which the Father is to the world; see 1 Cor. viii. 6; Col. i. 19. The kingdom of grace, and all the life in that kingdom, are as fully and absolutely in the hand of the Redeemer as the kingdom of providence is in the hand of the Creator; and as God, who gives being to all things, has his being of himself, so Christ, who gives life, raised himself to life by his own power, *ch.* x. 18.

[3.] His *acting* according to this authority and ability. Having *life in himself,* and being authorized to *quicken whom he will,* by virtue hereof there are, accordingly, two resurrections performed by his powerful word, both which are here spoken of:—

First, A resurrection that *now is* (*v.* 29), a resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, by the power of Christ's grace. *The hour is coming, and now is.* It is a resurrection begun already, and further to be carried on, *when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.* This is plainly distinguished from that in *v.* 28, which speaks of the resurrection at the end of time. This says nothing, as that does, of the dead in their graves, and of all of them, and their coming forth. Now, 1. Some think this was fulfilled in those whom he miraculously raised to life, Jairus's daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus; and it is observable that all whom Christ raised were *spoken to,* as, *Damsel, arise; Young man, arise; Lazarus, come forth;* whereas those raised under the Old Testament were raised, not by a word, but other applications, 1 Kings xvii. 21; 2 Kings iv. 34; xiii. 21. Some understand it of those saints that rose with Christ; but we do not read of the *voice of the Son of God* calling them. But, 2. I rather understand it of the power of the doctrine of Christ, for the recovering and quickening of those that were *dead in trespasses and sins,* Eph. ii. 1. The *hour* was *coming* when dead souls should be made alive by the *preaching* of the gospel, and a spirit of life from God accompanying it: nay, it *then was,* while Christ was upon earth. It may refer especially to the *calling of the Gentiles,* which is said to be as life from the dead, and, some think, was prefigured by Ezekiel's vision (*ch.* xxxvii. 1), and foretold, Isa. xxvi. 19. *Thy dead men shall live.* But it is to be applied to all the wonderful success of the gospel, among both Jews and Gentiles; an hour which still *is,* and is still *coming,* till all the elect be effectually called. Note, (1.) Sinners are spiritually *dead,* destitute of spiritual life, sense, strength, and motion, dead to God, miserable, but neither sensible of their misery nor able to help themselves out of it. (2.) The conversion of a soul to God is its resurrection from death to life; then it begins to live when it begins to *live to God,* to breathe after him, and move towards him. (3.) It is by the *voice of the Son of God* that souls are raised to spiritual life; it is wrought by his power, and that power conveyed and communicated by his word: *The dead shall hear,* shall be made to hear, to understand, receive, and believe, the *voice of the Son of God,* to hear it as his voice; then the Spirit by it gives life, otherwise the *letter kills.* (4.) The voice of Christ must be heard by us, that we may live by it. They that hear, and attend to what they hear, shall live. *Hear and your soul shall live,* Isa. lv. 3.

Secondly, A resurrection yet *to come;* this is spoken of, *v.* 28, 29, introduced with, "*Marvel not at this,* which I have said of the *first* resurrection, do not reject it as incredible and absurd, for at the end of time you shall all see a more sensible and amazing proof of the power and authority of the Son of man." As *his own* resurrection was re-

served to be the final and concluding proof of his personal commission, so the resurrection of *all men* is reserved to be a like proof of his commission to be executed by his spirit. Now observe here,

a. When this resurrection shall be: *The hour is coming;* it is *fixed* to an hour, so very punctual is this great appointment. The judgment is not adjourned *sine die—to some time not yet pitched upon;* no, *he hath appointed a day. The hour is coming.* (*a.*) It is *not yet* come, it is not the hour spoken of at *v.* 25, that is coming, and *now is.* Those erred dangerously who said that the *resurrection was past already,* 2 Tim. ii. 18. But, (*b.*) It *will certainly* come, it is coming on, nearer every day than other; it is at the door. How far off it is we know not; but we know that it is infallibly designed and unalterably determined.

b. Who shall be raised: *All that are in the graves,* all that have died from the beginning of time, and all that shall die to the end of time. It was said (Dan. xii. 2), *Many* shall arise; Christ here tells us that those *many* shall be *all; all* must appear before the Judge, and therefore *all* must be raised; every person, and the whole of every person; every soul shall return to its body, and every *bone to its bone.* The grave is the prison of dead bodies, where they are *detained;* their furnace, where they are *consumed* (Job xxiv. 19); yet, in prospect of their resurrection, we may call it their *bed,* where they sleep to be *awaked* again; their treasury, where they are laid up to be used again. Even those that are not *put into graves* shall arise; but, because most are put into graves, Christ uses this expression, *all that are in the graves.* The Jews used the word *sheol* for the *grave,* which signifies *the state of the dead;* all that are in that state *shall hear.*

c. How they shall be raised. Two things are here told us:—(*a.*) The efficient of this resurrection: *They shall hear his voice;* that is, he shall cause them to hear it, as Lazarus was made to hear that word, *Come forth;* a divine power shall go along with the voice, to put life into them, and enable them to obey it. When Christ rose, there was no voice heard, not a word spoken, because he rose by his own power; but at the resurrection of the children of men we find three voices spoken of, 1 Thess. iv. 16. The Lord shall descend with a *shout,* the shout of a king, with *the voice of the archangel;* either Christ himself, the prince of the angels, or the commander-in-chief, under him, of the heavenly hosts; and with *the trumpet of God:* the soldier's trumpet sounding the alarm of war, the judge's trumpet publishing the summons to the court. (*b.*) The effect of it: *They shall come forth* out of their graves, as prisoners out of their prison-house; they shall *arise out* of the dust, and shake themselves from it; see Isa. lii. 1, 2, 11. But this is not all; they shall *appear* before Christ's tribunal, shall *come forth* as those that are to be tried, *come forth* to the bar, publicly to receive their doom.

d. To what they shall be raised; to a different state of happiness or misery, according to their different character; to a state of retribution, according to what they did in the state of probation.

(*a.*) *They that have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life;* they shall live again, to live for ever. Note, [*a.*] Whatever name men are called by, or whatever plausible profession they make, it will be well in the great day with those only that have *done good,* have done that which is pleasing to God and profitable to others. [*b.*] The resurrection of the body will be a resurrection of life to all those, and those only, that have been sincere and constant in *doing good.* They shall not only be publicly *acquitted,* as a pardoned criminal, we say, has *his life,* but they shall be *admitted* into the presence of God, and that is life, it is better than life; they shall be *attended* with comforts in perfection. To live is to be *happy,* and they shall be *advanced* above the fear of death; that is *life* indeed in which *mortality* is for ever *swallowed* up.

(*b.*) *They that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation;* they shall live again, to be for ever dying. The Pharisees thought that the resurrection pertained only to the just, but Christ here rectifies that mistake. Note, [*a.*] *Evil doers,* whatever they pretend, will be treated in the day of judgment as *evil men.* [*b*] The resurrection will be to evil doers, who did not by repentance undo what they had done amiss, a *resurrection* of damnation. They shall come forth to be publicly convicted of rebellion against God, and publicly *condemned* to everlasting punishment; to be *sentenced* to it, and immediately *sent* to it without reprieve. Such will the resurrection be.

(2.) Observe what is here said concerning the Mediator's *authority to execute judgment, v.* 22—24, 27. As he has an almighty power, so he has a sovereign jurisdiction; and who so fit to preside in the great affairs of the other life as he who is the Father and fountain of life? Here is,

[1.] Christ's commission or delegation to the office of a judge, which is twice spoken of here (*v.* 22): *He hath committed all judgment to the Son;* and again (*v.* 27): *He hath given him authority.*

First, The *Father judges no man;* not that the Father hath resigned the government, but he is pleased to govern by Jesus Christ; so that man is not under the terror of dealing with God immediately, but has the comfort of access to him by a Mediator. The *Father judges no man;* that is, 1. He does not *rule* us by the *mere* right of *creation,* but by *covenant,* and upon certain terms settled by a Mediator. Having made us, he *may* do what he *pleases* with us, as the potter with the clay; yet he does not take advantage of this,

but draws us *with the cords of a man.* 2 He does not determine our everlasting condition by the *covenant of innocency,* nor take the advantage he has against us for the violation of that covenant. The Mediator having undertaken to make a *vicarious* satisfaction, the matter is referred to him, and God is willing to enter upon a new treaty; *not under the law* of the Creator, *but the grace* of the Redeemer.

Secondly, He has committed all judgment to the Son, has constituted him *Lord of all* (Acts x. 36; Rom. xiv. 9), as Joseph in Egypt, Gen. xli. 40. This was prophesied of, Ps. lxxii. 1; Isa. xi. 3, 4; Jer. xxiii. 5; Mic. v. 1—4; Ps. lxvii. 4; xcvi. 13; xcviii. 9. All judgment is committed to our Lord Jesus; for, 1. He is *entrusted* with the administration of the *providential kingdom,* is *head over all things* (Eph. i. 22), head of every man, 1 Cor. xi. 3. All things consist by him, Col. i. 17. 2. He is empowered to make laws immediately to bind conscience. *I say unto you* is now the form in which the statutes of the kingdom of heaven run. *Be it enacted* by the Lord Jesus, and by *his* authority. All the acts now in force are touched with his sceptre. 3. He is authorized to appoint and settle the terms of the new covenant, and to draw up the articles of peace between God and man; it is God in Christ that reconciles the world, and to him he has given power to confer eternal life. The book of life is the Lamb's book; by his award we must stand or fall. 4. He is commissioned to carry on and complete the war with the powers of darkness; to cast out and *give judgment against the prince of this world, ch.* xii. 31. He is commissioned not only to *judge,* but to *make war,* Rev. xix. 11. All that will fight *for God against Satan* must enlist themselves under *his* banner. 5. He is constituted sole manager of the judgment of the great day. The ancients generally understood these words of that *crowning act* of his judicial power. The final and universal judgment is committed to the Son of man; the tribunal is *his,* it is the judgment-seat of Christ; the retinue is his, *his* mighty angels; he will try the causes, and pass the sentence. Acts xvii. 31.

Thirdly, He has *given him authority to execute judgment also, v.* 27. Observe, 1. What the authority is which our Redeemer is invested with: *An authority to execute judgment;* he has not only a legislative and judicial power, but an *executive* power too. The phrase here is used particularly for the judgment of condemnation, Jude 15. ποιῆσαι κρίσιν—*to execute judgment* upon all; the same with his *taking vengeance,* 2 Thess. i. 8. The ruin of impenitent sinners comes from the hand of Christ; he that *executes judgment* upon them is the same that would have *wrought salvation* for them, which makes the sentence unexceptionable; and there is no relief against the sentence of the Redeemer; salvation itself cannot save those whom the Saviour *condemns,* which makes the ruin *remediless.* 2 Whence he has that authority: the Father *gave it to him.* Christ's authority as Mediator is delegated and derived; he acts as the Father's Vicegerent, as the Lord's Anointed, the Lord's Christ. Now all this redounds very much to the honour of Christ, acquitting him from the guilt of blasphemy, in making himself *equal with God;* and very much to the comfort of all believers, who may with the greatest assurance venture their all in such hands.

[2.] Here are the reasons (reasons of state) for which this commission was given him. He has all judgment committed to him for two reasons:—

First, Because he is the *Son of man;* which denotes these three things:—1. His humiliation and gracious condescension. Man is a worm, the son of man a worm; yet this was the nature, this the character, which the Redeemer assumed, in pursuance of the counsels of love; to this low estate he stooped, and submitted to all the mortifications attending it, because it was *his Father's will;* in recompence therefore of this wonderful obedience, God did thus dignify him. Because he condescended to be the *Son of man,* his Father made him *Lord of all,* Phil. ii. 8, 9. 2. His affinity and alliance to us. The Father has committed the government of the children of men to him, because, being the *Son of man,* he is of the same nature with those whom he is *set over,* and therefore the more unexceptionable, and the more acceptable, as a Judge. *Their governor shall proceed from the midst of them,* Jer. xxx. 21. Of this that law was typical: *One of thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee,* Deut. xvii. 15. 3. His being the Messiah promised. In that famous vision of his kingdom and glory, Dan. vii. 13, 14, he is called the *Son of man;* and Ps. viii. 4—6 Thou hast made the Son of man have *dominion over the works of thy hands.* He is the Messiah, and therefore is invested with all this power. The Jews usually called the Christ the *Son of David;* but Christ usually called himself the *Son of man,* which was the more humble title, and bespeaks him a prince and Saviour, not to the Jewish nation only, but to the whole race of mankind.

Secondly, That all men should honour the Son, v. 23. The honouring of Jesus Christ is here spoken of as God's great design (the Son intended to glorify the Father, and therefore the Father intended to glorify the Son, *ch.* xii. 32); and as man's great duty, in compliance with that design. If God will have the Son honoured, it is the duty of all to whom he is made known to honour him. Observe here, 1. The *respect* that is to be paid to our Lord Jesus: We must *honour the Son,* must look upon him as one that is to be *honoured,* both on account of his transcendent excellences and perfections in himself, and of the relations he stands in to us, and must study

to give him honour accordingly; must *confess that he is Lord,* and worship him; must honour him who was dishonoured for us. 2. The degree of it: *Even as they honour the Father.* This *supposes* it to be our duty to *honour the Father;* for revealed religion is founded on natural religion, and *directs* us to *honour the Son,* to honour him with *divine* honour; we must honour the Redeemer with the same honour with which we honour the Creator. So far was it from blasphemy for him to make himself *equal with God* that it is the highest injury that can be for us to make him otherwise. The truths and laws of the Christian religion, so far as they are revealed, are as sacred and honourable as those of natural religion, and to be equally had in estimation; for we lie under the same obligations to Christ, the Author of our well-being, that we lie under to the Author of our being; and have as necessary a dependence upon the Redeemer's grace as upon the Creator's providence, which is a sufficient ground for this law—*to honour the Son as we honour the Father.* To enforce this law, it is added, *He that honours not the Son honours not the Father* who has sent him. Some pretend a reverence for the Creator, and speak *honourably* of him, who make light of the Redeemer, and speak *contemptibly* of him; but let such know that the honours and interests of the Father and Son are so inseparably twisted and interwoven that the Father never reckons himself *honoured* by any that *dishonour* the Son. Note, (1.) Indignities done to the Lord Jesus reflect upon God himself, and will so be construed and reckoned for in the court of heaven. The Son having so far espoused the Father's honour as to take *to himself* the *reproaches cast on him* (Rom. xv. 3), the Father does no less espouse the Son's honour, and counts himself struck at through him. (2.) The reason of this is because the Son is sent and commissioned by the Father; it is the *Father who hath sent him.* Affronts to an ambassador are justly resented by the prince that sends him. And by this rule those who truly *honour the Son honour the Father also;* see Phil. ii. 11.

[3.] Here is the rule by which the Son goes in executing this commission, so those words seem to come in (*v.* 24): *He that heareth and believeth* hath *everlasting life.* Here we have the substance of the whole gospel; the preface commands *attention* to a thing most weighty, and *assent* to a thing most certain: "*Verily, verily, I say unto you,* I, to whom you hear *all judgment is committed,* I, in whose lips is a divine sentence; take from *me* the Christian's *character* and *charter.*"

First, The *character* of a Christian: *He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me.* To be a Christian indeed is, 1. To *hear the word of Christ.* It is not enough to be within hearing of it, but we must *attend on* it, as scholars on the instructions of their teachers; and *attend to* it, as servants to the commands of their masters; we must hear and obey it, must abide by the gospel of Christ as the fixed rule of our faith and practice. 2. To *believe on him that sent him;* for Christ's design is to *bring us to God;* and, as he is the first original of all grace, so is he the last object of all faith. Christ is our *way;* God is our rest. We must believe on God as *having sent* Jesus Christ, and recommended himself to our faith and love, by manifesting his glory in *the face of Jesus Christ* (2 Cor. iv. 6), as *his* Father and *our Father.*

Secondly, The *charter* of a Christian, in which all that are Christians indeed are interested. See what we get by Christ. 1. A charter of pardon: *He shall not come into condemnation.* The grace of the gospel is a full discharge from the curse of the law. A believer shall not only not *lie under* condemnation eternally, but shall not *come into condemnation* now, not come into the danger of it (Rom. viii. 1), not *come into judgment,* not be so much as arraigned. 2. A charter of privileges: He is *passed out of death to life,* is invested in a present happiness in spiritual life and entitled to a future happiness in eternal life. The tenour of the first covenant was, *Do this and live;* the man that doeth them shall live in them. Now this proves Christ equal with the Father that he has power to propose the *same* benefit to the *hearers of his word* that had been proposed to the *keepers of the old law,* that is, life: *Hear and live, believe and live,* is what we may venture our souls upon, when we are disabled to *do and live;* see *ch.* xvii. 2.

[4.] Here is the righteousness of his proceedings pursuant to this commission, *v.* 30. All judgment being committed to him, we cannot but ask *how he manages it.* And here he answers, *My judgment is just.* All Christ's acts of government, both *legislative* and *judicial,* are exactly agreeable to the rules of equity; see Prov. viii. 8. There can lie no exceptions against any of the determinations of the Redeemer; and therefore, as there shall be no repeal of any of his statutes, so there shall be no appeal from any of his sentences. His judgments are certainly just, for they are directed,

First, By the Father's *wisdom: I can of my ownself* do nothing, nothing without the Father, but *as I hear I judge,* as he had said before (*v.* 19), The Son *can do nothing but what he sees the Father do;* so here, nothing but what he hears the Father *say: As I hear,* 1. From the secret eternal counsels of the Father, *so I judge.* Would we know what we may depend upon in our dealing with God? *Hear the word* of Christ. We need not dive into the divine counsels, those *secret things* which belong not to us, but attend to the revealed dictates of Christ's government and judgment, which will furnish us with an unerring guide; for what Christ has adjudged is an exact copy or counterpart of

what the Father has decreed. 2. From the published records of the Old Testament. Christ, in all the execution of his undertaking, had an eye to the scripture, and made it his business to conform to this, and *fulfil* it: *As it was written in the volume of the book.* Thus he taught us to do *nothing of ourselves,* but, *as we hear* from the word of God, *so to judge* of things, and act accordingly.

Secondly, By the Father's *will: My judgment is just,* and cannot be otherwise, *because I seek not my own will,* but *his who sent me.* Not as if the will of Christ were contrary to the will of the Father, as the flesh is contrary to the spirit in us; but, 1. Christ had, as man, the natural and innocent affections of the human nature, *sense of pain* and *pleasure,* an inclination to life, an aversion to death: yet he *pleased not himself,* did not confer with these, nor consult these, when he was to go on his undertaking, but acquiesced entirely in the will of his Father. 2. What he did as Mediator was not the result of any *peculiar* or *particular* purpose and design of his own; what he did *seek* to do was not for his own mind's sake. but he was therein guided by his Father's will, and the purpose which he had *purposed to himself.* This our Saviour did upon all occasions *refer himself to* and govern himself by.

Thus our Lord Jesus has opened his commission (whether to the conviction of his enemies or no) to his own honour and the everlasting comfort of all his friends, who here see him *able to save to the uttermost.*

31 If I bear witness of myself, my
witness is not true. 32 There is
another that beareth witness of me;
and I know that the witness which
he witnesseth of me is true. 33 Ye
sent unto John, and he bare witness
unto the truth. 34 But I receive not
testimony from man: but these things
I say, that ye might be saved. 35
He was a burning and a shining light:
and ye were willing for a season to
rejoice in his light. 36 But I have
greater witness than *that* of John:
for the works which the Father hath
given me to finish, the same works
that I do, bear witness of me, that
the Father hath sent me. 37 And
the Father himself, which hath sent
me, hath borne witness of me. Ye
have neither heard his voice at any
time, nor seen his shape. 38 And
ye have not his word abiding in you:
for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. 39 Search the scriptures;
for in them ye think ye have eternal
life: and they are they which testify
of me. 40 And ye will not come to
me, that ye might have life. 41 I
receive not honour from men. 42
But I know you, that ye have not
the love of God in you. 43 I am
come in my Father's name, and ye
receive me not: if another shall come
in his own name, him ye will receive.
44 How can ye believe, which receive
honour one of another, and seek not
the honour that *cometh* from God
only? 45 Do not think that I will
accuse you to the Father: there is
one that accuseth you, *even* Moses,
in whom ye trust. 46 For had ye
believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. 47
But if ye believe not his writings,
how shall ye believe my words?

In these verses our Lord Jesus proves and confirms the commission he had produced, and makes it out that he was sent of God to be the Messiah.

I. He *sets aside* his own testimony of himself (*v.* 31): "*If I bear witness of myself,* though it is infallibly true (*ch.* viii. 14), yet, according to the common rule of judgment among men, you will not admit it as *legal proof,* nor allow it to be *given in evidence.*" Now, 1. This reflects reproach upon the sons of men, and their veracity and integrity. Surely we may say deliberately, what David said in haste, *All men are liars,* else it would never have been such a received maxim that a man's testimony of himself is suspicious, and not to be relied on; it is a sign that self-love is stronger than the love of truth. And yet, 2. It reflects honour on the Son of God, and bespeaks his wonderful condescension, that, though he is the *faithful witness,* the truth itself, who may challenge to be credited *upon his honour,* and his own single testimony, yet he is pleased to *waive his privilege,* and, for the confirmation of our faith, refers himself to his *vouchers,* that we may have full satisfaction.

II. He produces other witnesses that bear testimony to him that he was sent of God.

1. The Father himself bore testimony to him (*v.* 32): *There is another that beareth witness.* I take this to be meant of God the Father, for Christ mentions *his* testimony with his own (*ch.* viii. 18): *I bear witness of myself, and the Father beareth witness of me.* Observe,

(1.) The seal which the Father put to his commission: He *beareth witness of me,* not only has done so by a voice from heaven, but still does so by the tokens of his presence with me. See who they are to whom God will bear witness. [1.] Those whom he *sends* and *employs;* where he gives commissions he gives credentials. [2.] Those

who *bear witness* to him; so Christ did. God will own and honour those that own and honour him. [3.] Those who decline *bearing witness of themselves;* so Christ did. God will take care that those who humble and abase themselves, and seek not their own glory, shall not *lose by it.*

(2.) The satisfaction Christ had in this testimony: "*I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.* I am very well assured that I have a divine mission, and do not in the least hesitate concerning it; thus he had the *witness in himself.*" The devil tempted him to question his being the Son of God, but he never yielded.

2. John Baptist witnessed to Christ, *v.* 33, &c. John came to *bear witness of the light* (*ch.* i. 7); his business was to prepare his way, and direct people to him: *Behold the Lamb of God.*

(1.) Now the testimony of John was, [1.] A *solemn* and public testimony: "You sent an embassy of priests and Levites to John, which gave him an opportunity of publishing what he had to say; it was not a popular, but a judicial testimony. [2.] It was a *true* testimony: *He bore witness to the truth,* as a witness ought to do, the *whole truth,* and *nothing but the truth.* Christ does not say, *He bore witness to me* (though every one knew he did), but, like an honest man, *He bore witness to the truth.* Now John was confessedly such a holy, good man, so mortified to the world, and so conversant with divine things, that it could not be imagined he should be guilty of such a forgery and imposture as to say what he did concerning Christ if it had not been so, and if he had not been sure of it.

(2.) Two things are added concerning John's testimony:—

[1.] That it was a testimony *ex abundanti —more than he needed to vouch* (*v.* 34): *I receive not testimony from man.* Though Christ saw fit to quote John's testimony, it was with a protestation that it shall not be deemed or construed so as to prejudice the prerogative of his self-sufficiency. Christ needs no letters of commendation, no testimonials or certificates, but what his own worth and excellency bring with him; why then did Christ here urge the testimony of John? Why, *these things I say, that you may be saved.* This he aimed at in all this discourse, to save not his own life, but the souls of others; he produced John's testimony because, being one *of themselves,* it was to be hoped that they would hearken to it. Note, *First,* Christ desires and designs the salvation even of his enemies and persecutors. *Secondly,* The word of Christ is the ordinary means of salvation. *Thirdly,* Christ in his word considers our infirmities and condescends to our capacities, consulting not so much what it befits so great a prince to say as what we can bear, and what will be most likely to do us good.

[2.] That it was a testimony *ad hominem —to the man,* because John Baptist was one whom *they* had a respect for (*v.* 35): *He was a light* among you. Observe,

First, The character of John Baptist: *He was a burning and a shining light.* Christ often spoke honourably of John; he was now in prison under a cloud, yet Christ gives him his *due praise,* which we must be ready to do to all that faithfully serve God. 1. He was *a light,* not φῶς—*lux, light* (so Christ was *the* light), but λύκνος—*lucerna, a luminary,* a derived subordinate light. His office was to enlighten a dark world with notices of the Messiah's approach, to whom he was as the *morning star.* 2. He was a *burning* light, which denotes *sincerity;* painted fire may be made to shine, but that which burns is true fire. It denotes also his *activity,* zeal, and fervency, burning in love to God and the souls of men; fire is always working on itself or something else, so is a good minister. 3. He was a *shining* light, which denotes either his *exemplary conversation,* in which our light should shine (Matt. v. 16), or an *eminent* diffusive influence. He was illustrious in the sight of others; though he affected obscurity and retirement, and was *in the deserts,* yet such were his doctrine, his baptism, his life, that he became very *remarkable,* and attracted the eyes of the nation

Secondly, The affections of the people to him: *You were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.* 1. It was a *transport* that they were *in,* upon the appearing of John: "*You were willing*—ηθελήσατε, *you delighted* to *rejoice in his light;* you were very proud that you had such a man among you, who was the honour of your country; you were willing ἀγαλλιασθῆναι—willing to *dance,* and make a noise about this light, as boys about a bonfire." 2. It was but *transient,* and soon over: "You were fond of him, πρὸς ὥραν—*for an hour,* for *a season,* as little children are fond of a new thing; you were pleased with John awhile, but soon grew weary of him and his ministry, and said that *he had a devil,* and now you have him in prison." Note, Many, that seem to be affected and pleased with the gospel at first, afterwards despise and reject it; it is common for forward and noisy professors to cool and fall off. These here rejoiced in John's light, but never walked in it, and therefore did not keep to it; they were like the stony ground. While Herod was a friend to John Baptist, the people caressed him; but when he fell under Herod's frowns he lost their favours: "*You were willing* to countenance John, πρὸς ὥραν, that is, for *temporal ends*" (so some take it); "you were glad of him, in hopes to make a tool of him, by his interest and under the shelter of his name to have shaken off the Roman yoke, and recovered the civil liberty and honour of your country." Now, (1.) Christ mentions their respect to John, to *condemn* them for their present opposition to himself, to whom

John bore witness. If they had continued their veneration for John, as they ought to have done, they would have embraced Christ. (2.) He mentions the passing away of their respect, to justify God in depriving them, as he had now done, of John's ministry, and putting that light under a bushel.

3. Christ's own works witnessed to him (*v.* 36): *I have a testimony greater than that of John;* for *if we believe the witness of men* sent of God, as John was, the *witness of God* immediately, and not by the ministry of men, *is greater*, 1 John v. 9. Observe, Though the witness of John was a less *cogent* and less *considerable* witness, yet our Lord was pleased to make use of it. We must be glad of all the supports that offer themselves for the confirmation of our faith, though they may not amount to a demonstration, and we must not *invalidate* any, under pretence that there are others more *conclusive;* we have occasion for them all. Now this greater testimony was that of the *works* which *his Father had given him to finish.* That is, (1.) In general the whole course of his life and ministry—his revealing God and his will to us, setting up his kingdom among men, reforming the world, destroying Satan's kingdom, restoring fallen man to his primitive purity and felicity, and shedding abroad in men's hearts the love of God and of one another—all that work of which he said when he died, *It is finished,* it was all, from first to last, *opus Deo dignum—a work worthy of God;* all he said and did was *holy* and *heavenly,* and a divine purity, power, and grace shone in it, proving abundantly that he was *sent of God.* (2.) In particular. The miracles he wrought for the proof of his divine mission witnessed of him. Now it is here said, [1.] That these works were *given him by the Father,* that is, he was both *appointed* and *empowered* to work them; for, as Mediator, he *derived* both commission and strength from his Father. [2.] They were given to him to *finish;* he must do all those works of wonder which the counsel and foreknowledge of God had before determined to be done; and his finishing them proves a divine power; for as *for God his work is perfect.* [3.] These works did *bear witness of him,* did prove that he was sent of God, and that what he said concerning himself was true; see Heb. ii. 4; Acts ii. 22. That the Father had sent him as *a Father,* not as a master sends his servant on an errand, but as a father sends his son to take possession for himself; if God had not sent him, he would not have *seconded* him, would not have *sealed* him, as he did by the works he gave him to do; for the world's Creator will never be its deceiver.

4. He produces, more fully than before, his Father's testimony concerning him (*v.* 37): *The Father that sent me hath borne witness of me.* The prince is not accustomed to follow his ambassador himself, to confirm his commission *viva voce—by speaking;* but God was pleased to bear witness of his Son himself by a voice from heaven at his baptism (Matt. iii. 17): This is my ambassador, *This is my beloved Son.* The Jews reckoned *Bath-kol—the daughter of a voice,* a voice from heaven, one of the ways by which God made known his mind; and in that way he had owned Christ publicly and solemnly, and repeated it, Matt. xvii. 5. Note, (1.) Those whom God *sends* he will *bear witness* of; where he gives a commission, he will not fail to seal it; he that never *left himself without witness* (Acts xiv. 17) will never leave any of his servants so, who go upon his errand. (2.) Where God demands belief, he will not fail to give sufficient *evidence,* as he has done concerning Christ. That which was to be witnessed concerning Christ was chiefly this, that the God we had offended was willing to accept of him as a Mediator. Now concerning this he has *himself* given us full satisfaction (and he was fittest to do it), declaring himself well-pleased in him; if we be so, the work is done. Now, it might be suggested, if God himself thus bore witness of Christ, how came it to pass that he was not universally received by the Jewish nation and their rulers? To this Christ here answers that it was not to be thought strange, nor could their infidelity weaken his credibility, for two reasons:—[1.] Because they were not acquainted with such extraordinary revelations of God and his will: *You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape,* or *appearance.* They showed themselves to be as ignorant of God, though they professed relation to him, as we are of a man we never either saw or heard. "But why do I talk to you of God's bearing witness of me? He is one you know nothing of, nor have any acquaintance or communion with." Note, Ignorance of God is the true reason of men's rejecting the record he has given concerning his Son. A right understanding of *natural religion* would discover to us such admirable congruities in the *Christian* religion as would greatly dispose our minds to the entertainment of it. Some give this sense of it: "The Father bore witness of me by a *voice,* and the *descent of a dove,* which is such an extraordinary thing that you never saw or heard the like; and yet for my sake there was such a voice and appearance; yea, and you might have *heard that voice,* you might have *seen that appearance,* as others did, if you had closely attended the ministry of John, but by slighting it you missed of that testimony." [2.] Because they were not affected, no, not with the ordinary ways by which God had revealed himself to them: *You have not his word abiding in you, v.* 38. They had the scriptures of the Old Testament; might they not by them be disposed to receive Christ? Yes, if they had had their due influence upon them. But, *First,* The word of God was not in them; it was *among them,* in their country, in their hands, but not *in them,* in their

hearts: not ruling in their souls, but only shining in their eyes and sounding in their ears. What did it avail them that they had the oracles of God *committed* to them (Rom. iii. 2), when they had not these oracles *commanding* in them? If they had, they would readily have embraced Christ. *Secondly,* It did not *abide.* Many have the word of God coming into them, and making some impressions for awhile, but it does not *abide* with them; it is not constantly in them, as a man at home, but only now and then, as a *wayfaring man.* If the word *abide in* us, if we converse with it by frequent meditation, consult with it upon every occasion, and conform to it in our conversation, we shall then readily receive the witness of the Father concerning Christ; see *ch.* vii. 17. But how did it appear that they *had not the word of God abiding in them?* It appeared by this, *Whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.* There was so much said in the Old Testament concerning Christ, to direct people when and where to look for him, and so to facilitate the discovery of him, that, if they had duly considered these things, they could not have avoided the conviction of Christ's being sent of God; so that their not believing in Christ was a certain sign that the word of God did not abide in them. Note, The in-dwelling of the word, and Spirit, and grace of God in us, is best tried by its effects, particularly by our *receiving what he sends,* the commands, the messengers, the providences he sends, especially Christ whom he hath sent.

5. The last witness he calls is the Old Testament, which witnessed of him, and to it he appeals (*v.* 39, &c.): *Search the scriptures,* ἐρευνᾶτε.

(1.) This may be read, either, [1.] "*You search the scriptures,* and you do well to do so; you read them daily in your synagogues, you have rabbies, and doctors, and scribes, that make it their business to study them, and criticize upon them." The Jews boasted of the flourishing of scripture-learning in the days of Hillel, who died about twelve years after Christ's birth, and reckoned some of those who were then members of the sanhedrim the *beauties of their wisdom* and the *glories of their law;* and Christ owns that they did indeed search the scriptures, but it was in search of their *own glory:* "*You search the scriptures,* and therefore, if you were not *wilfully blind,* you would *believe in me.*" Note, It is possible for men to be very studious in the letter of the scripture, and yet to be strangers to the power and influence of it. Or, [2.] As we read it: *Search the scriptures;* and so, *First,* It was spoken to *them* in the nature of an *appeal:* "You profess to receive and believe the scripture; here I will *join issue* with you, let this be the judge, provided you will not *rest in the letter" (hærere in cortice),* "but will *search* into it." Note, when appeals are made to the scriptures, they must be searched. Search the whole book of scripture *throughout,* compare one passage with another, and explain one by another. We must likewise search particular passages *to the bottom,* and see not what they *seem* to say *prima facie—at the first appearance,* but what they say *indeed. Secondly,* It is spoken to *us* in the nature of an *advice,* or a command to all Christians to search the scriptures. Note, All those who would *find Christ* must *search the scriptures;* not only read them, and hear them, but search them, which denotes, 1. *Diligence* in seeking, labour, and study, and close application of mind. 2. *Desire* and *design* of finding. We must aim at some spiritual benefit and advantage in reading and studying the scripture, and often ask, "What am I now searching for?" We must search as for *hidden treasures* (Prov. ii. 4), as those that *sink* for gold or silver, or that *dive* for pearl, Job xxviii. 1—11. This ennobled the Bereans, Acts xvii. 11.

(2.) Now there are two things which we are here directed to have in our eye, in our searching the scripture: *heaven* our end, and *Christ* our way. [1.] We must search the scriptures for *heaven* as our *great end: For in them you think you have eternal life.* The scripture assures us of an eternal state set before us, and offers to us an eternal life in that state: it contains the *chart* that *describes* it, the *charter* that *conveys* it, the *direction* in the way that leads to it, and the *foundation* upon which the hope of it is built; and this is worth searching for where we are sure to find it. But to the Jews Christ saith only, *You think* you have *eternal life* in the scriptures, because, though they did retain the belief and hope of eternal life, and grounded their expectations of it upon the scriptures, yet herein they missed it, that they looked for it by the bare reading and studying of the scripture. It was a common but corrupt saying among them, *He that has the words of the law has eternal life;* they thought they were sure of heaven if they could say by *heart,* or rather by *rote,* such and such passages of scripture as they were directed to by the tradition of the elders; as they thought all the *vulgar* cursed because they did not thus know the law (*ch.* vii. 49), so they concluded all the *learned* undoubtedly *blessed.* [2.] We must *search the scriptures* for *Christ,* as the new and living *way* that leads to this *end.* These are *they,* the great and principal witnesses, *that testify of me.* Note, *First,* The scriptures, even those of the Old Testament, *testify* of Christ, and by them God *bears witness* to him. The Spirit of Christ in the prophets testified beforehand of him (1 Pet. i. 11), the purposes and promises of God concerning him, and the previous notices of him. The Jews knew very well that the Old Testament testified of the Messiah, and were critical in their remarks upon the passages that looked that way; and yet were careless, and wretchedly overseen, in the application of them. *Secondly, Therefore* we

must *search the scriptures*, and may hope to find eternal life in that search, because they testify of Christ; for this is *life eternal, to know him;* see 1 John v. 11. Christ is the treasure hid in the field of the scriptures, the water in those wells, the milk in those breasts.

(3.) To this testimony he annexes a reproof of their infidelity and wickedness in four instances; particularly,

[1.] Their *neglect of him* and his doctrine: "*You will not come to me, that you might have life*, *v.* 40. You search the scriptures, you believe the prophets, who you cannot but see testify of me; and yet you will not *come to me*, to whom they direct you." Their estrangement from Christ was the fault not so much of their *understandings* as of their *wills*. This is expressed as a complaint; Christ offered life, and it was not accepted. Note, *First*, There is *life* to be had with Jesus Christ for poor souls; we may have life, the life of *pardon* and *grace*, and *comfort* and *glory:* life is the perfection of our being, and inclusive of all happiness; and Christ is our life. *Secondly*, Those that would have this life must *come* to Jesus Christ for it; we may have it for the coming for. It *supposes* an assent of the understanding to the doctrine of Christ and the record given concerning him; it *lies in* the consent of the will to his government and grace, and it *produces* an answerable compliance in the affections and actions. *Thirdly*, The only reason why sinners die is because they *will not come* to Christ for life and happiness; it is not because they *cannot*, but because they *will not*. They will neither *accept* the life offered, because *spiritual* and *divine*, nor will they *agree* to the terms on which it is offered, nor *apply* themselves to the use of the appointed means: they will not be cured, for they will not observe the methods of cure. *Fourthly*, The wilfulness and obstinacy of sinners in rejecting the tenders of grace are a great grief to the Lord Jesus, and what he complains of. Those words (*v.* 41), *I receive not honour from men*, come in in a parenthesis, to obviate an objection against him, as if he sought his own glory, and made himself the head of a party, in obliging all to come to *him*, and applaud him. Note, 1. He did not *covet* nor *court* the applause of men, did not in the least affect that worldly pomp and splendour in which the carnal Jews expected their Messiah to appear. He charged those whom he cured not to make him known, and withdrew from those that would have made him king. 2. He *had not* the applause of men. Instead of *receiving honour* from men, he received a great deal of *dishonour* and disgrace from men, for he made himself of no reputation. 3. He *needed* not the applause of men; it was no addition to his glory whom all the angels of God worship, nor was he any otherwise pleased with it than as it was according to his Father's will, and for the happiness of those who, in giving honour *to him*, received much greater honour *from him*

[2.] Their *want of the love of God* (*v.* 42): "*I know you* very well, *that you have not the love of God in you.* Why should I wonder that you do not come to me, when you want even the first principle of *natural religion*, which is the *love of God?*" Note, The reason why people *slight Christ* is because they do not *love God;* for, if we did indeed love God, we should love him who is his express image, and hasten to him by whom only we may be restored to the favour of God. He charged them (*v.* 37) with *ignorance* of God, and here with want of love to him; *therefore* men have not the love of God because they desire not the knowledge of him. Observe, *First*, The crime charged upon them: *You have not the love of God in you.* They pretended a great love to God, and thought they proved it by their zeal for the law, the temple, and the sabbath; and yet they were really without the love of God. Note, There are many who make a great profession of religion who yet show they want the love of God by their neglect of Christ and their contempt of his commandments; they hate his holiness and undervalue his goodness. Observe, It is the love of God *in* us, that love seated *in the heart*, a living active principle there, that God will *accept;* the love *shed abroad* there, Rom. v. 5. *Secondly*, The proof of this charge, by the personal knowledge of Christ, who *searches the heart* (Rev. ii. 23) and knows what is *in man: I know you.* Christ sees through all our disguises, and can say to each of us, *I know thee.* 1. Christ knows men better than *their neighbours know them.* The people thought that the scribes and Pharisees were very devout and good men, but Christ knew that they had not the love of God in them. 2. Christ knows men better than *they know themselves.* These Jews had a very good opinion of themselves, but Christ knew how corrupt their inside was, notwithstanding the speciousness of their outside; we may deceive ourselves, but we cannot deceive him. 3. Christ knows men who do not, and will not, know him; he looks *on* those who industriously look *off* from him, and calls by their own name, their true name, those who have not known him.

[3.] Another crime charged upon them is their readiness to entertain false Christs and false prophets, while they obstinately opposed him who was the true Messias (*v.* 43): *I am come in my Father's name, and you receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him you will receive. Be astonished, O heavens, at this* (Jer. ii. 12, 13); *for my people have committed two evils*, great evils indeed. *First*, They have *forsaken the fountain of living waters*, for they would not receive Christ, who came in his Father's name, had his commission from his Father, and did all for his glory. *Secondly*, They have *hewn out broken cisterns*, they hearken

to every one that will set up in his own name. They forsake their own mercies, which is bad enough; and it is for *lying vanities*, which is worse. Observe here, 1. Those are false prophets who come in their own name, who run without being sent, and set up for themselves only. 2. It is just with God to suffer those to be deceived with false prophets who receive not the truth in the love of it. 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. The errors of antichrist are the just punishment of those who obey not the doctrine of Christ. They that shut their eyes against the true light are by the judgment of God given up to wander endlessly after *false lights*, and to be led aside after every *ignis fatuus*. 3. It is the gross folly of many that, while they *nauseate* ancient truths, they are *fond* of upstart errors; they loathe manna, and at the same time *feed upon ashes*. After the Jews had rejected Christ and his gospel, they were continually haunted with spectres, with *false Christs* and *false prophets* (Matt. xxiv. 24), and their proneness to follow such occasioned those distractions and seditions that hastened their ruin.

[4.] They are here charged with pride and vain-glory, and unbelief, the effect of them, *v.* 44. Having sharply reproved their unbelief, like a wise physician, he here searches into the cause, lays the axe to the root. They *therefore* slighted and undervalued Christ because they *admired* and *overvalued* themselves. Here is,

First, Their ambition of worldly honour. Christ despised it, *v.* 41. They set their hearts upon it: *You receive honour one of another;* that is, "You look for a Messiah in outward pomp, and promise yourselves worldly honour by him." *You receive honour:*—1. "You desire to receive it, and aim at this in all you do." 2. "You give honour to others, and applaud them, only that they may return it, and may applaud you." *Petimus dabimusque vicissim—We ask and we bestow.* It is the proud man's art to throw honour upon others only that it may rebound upon himself. 3. "You are very careful to keep all the honours to yourselves, and confine them to your own party, as if you had the monopoly of that which is honourable." 4. "What respect is shown to you you *receive* yourselves, and do not transmit to God, as Herod." Idolizing men and their sentiments, and affecting to be idolized by them and their applauses, are pieces of idolatry as directly contrary to Christianity as any other.

Secondly, Their neglect of spiritual honour, called here *the honour that comes from God only;* this they sought not, nor minded. Note, 1. True honour is that which *comes from God only*, that is real and lasting honour; those are honourable indeed whom he takes into covenant and communion with himself. 2. *This honour have all the saints.* All that believe in Christ, through him receive the honour that comes from God. He is not partial, but will give glory wherever he gives grace. 3. This honour that comes from God we must *seek*, must aim at it, and act for it, and take up with nothing short of it (Rom. ii. 29); we must account it *our reward*, as the Pharisees accounted the praise of men. 4. Those that will not come to Christ, and those that are ambitious of worldly honour, make it appear that they seek not the honour that comes from God, and it is their folly and ruin.

Thirdly, The influence this had upon their infidelity. *How can you believe* who are thus affected? Observe here, 1. The difficulty of believing arises from ourselves and our own corruption; we make our work hard to ourselves, and then complain it is impracticable. 2. The ambition and affectation of worldly honour are a great hindrance to faith in Christ. How can they believe who make the praise and applause of men their idol? When the profession and practice of serious godliness are unfashionable, are *every where spoken against*,—when Christ and his followers are men wondered at, and to be a Christian is to be like a *speckled bird* (and this is the common case),—how can they believe the summit of whose ambition is to *make a fair show in the flesh?*

6. The last witness here called is Moses, *v.* 45, &c. The Jews had a great veneration for Moses, and valued themselves upon their being the *disciples* of Moses, and pretended to adhere to Moses, in their opposition to Christ; but Christ here shows them,

(1.) That Moses was a witness against the unbelieving Jews, *and accused them to the Father: There is one that accuses you, even Moses.* This may be understood either, [1.] As showing the difference between the law and the gospel. Moses, that is, the law, *accuses you*, for by the law is the knowledge of sin; it *condemns* you, it is to those that trust to it a ministration of death and condemnation. But it is not the design of Christ's gospel to *accuse* us: *Think not that I will accuse you.* Christ did not come into the world as a *Momus*, to find fault and pick quarrels with every body, or as a *spy* upon the actions of men, or a *promoter*, to fish for crimes; no, he came to be an advocate, not an accuser; to reconcile God and man, and not to set them more at variance. What fools were they then that adhered to Moses against Christ, and *desired to be under the law!* Gal. iv. 21. Or, [2.] As showing the manifest unreasonableness of their infidelity: "Think not that I will appeal from your bar to God's and challenge you to answer there for what you do against me, as injured innocency usually does; no, I do not need; you are already accused, and cast, in the court of heaven; Moses himself says enough to convict you of, and condemn you for, your unbelief." Let them not mistake *concerning Christ;* though he was a prophet, he did not improve his interest in heaven against

those that persecuted him, did not, as Elias, *make intercession against Israel* (Rom vi. 2), nor as Jeremiah desire to *see God's vengeance on them*, Jer. xx. 12. Instead of *accusing* his crucifiers to his Father, he prayed, *Father, forgive them.* Nor let them mistake concerning Moses, as if he would stand by them in rejecting Christ; no, *There is one that accuses you, even Moses in whom you trust.* Note, *First,* External privileges and advantages are commonly the vain confidence of those who reject Christ and his grace. The Jews *trusted* in Moses, and thought their having his laws and ordinances would save them. *Secondly,* Those that confide in their privileges, and do not improve them, will find not only that their confidence is disappointed, but that those very privileges will be witnesses against them.

(2.) That Moses was a witness for Christ and to his doctrine (*v.* 46, 47): *He wrote of me.* Moses did particularly prophesy of Christ, as the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, the Shiloh, the great Prophet; the ceremonies of the law of Moses were *figures of him that was to come.* The Jews made Moses the patron of their opposition to Christ; but Christ here shows them their error, that Moses was so far from writing against Christ that he wrote *for him,* and *of him.* But, [1.] Christ here charges it on the Jews that they *did not believe Moses.* He had said (*v.* 45) that they *trusted* in Moses, and yet here he undertakes to make out that they did not believe Moses; they trusted to his name, but they did not receive his doctrine in its true sense and meaning; they did not rightly understand, nor give credit to, what there was in the writings of Moses concerning the Messiah. [2.] He proves this charge from their disbelief of him: *Had you believed Moses, you would have believed me.* Note, *First,* The surest trial of faith is by the effects it produces. Many say that they believe whose actions give their words the lie; for had they believed the scriptures they would have done otherwise than they did. *Secondly,* Those who rightly believe one part of scripture will receive every part. The prophecies of the Old Testament were so fully accomplished in Christ that those who rejected Christ did in effect deny those prophecies, and set them aside. [3.] From their disbelief of Moses he infers that it was not strange that they rejected him: *If you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?* How can it be thought that you should? *First,* "If you do not believe sacred *writings,* those oracles which are in black and white, which is the most certain way of conveyance, *how shall you believe my words,* words being usually less regarded?" *Secondly,* "If you do not believe Moses, for whom you have such a profound veneration, how is it likely that you should believe me, whom you look upon with so much contempt?" See Exod. vi. 12. *Thirdly,* "If you believe not what Moses spoke and wrote of me, which is a strong and cogent testimony for me, how shall you believe me and my mission?" If we admit not the premises, how shall we admit the conclusion? The truth of the Christian religion, it being a matter purely of divine revelation, depends upon the divine authority of the scripture; if therefore we believe not the divine inspiration of those writings, how shall we receive the doctrine of Christ?

Thus ends Christ's plea for himself, in answer to the charge exhibited against him. What effect it had we know not; it would seem to have had this, their *mouths* were *stopped* for the present, and they could not for shame but drop the prosecution, and yet their *hearts* were *hardened.*

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter we have, I. The miracle of the loaves, ver. 1—14. II. Christ's walking upon the water, ver. 15—21. III. The people's flocking after him to Capernaum, ver. 22—25. IV. His conference with them, occasioned by the miracle of the loaves, in which he reproves them for seeking carnal food, and directs them to spiritual food (ver. 26, 27), showing them how they must labour for spiritual food (ver. 28, 29), and what that spiritual food is, ver. 30—59. V. Their discontent at what he said, and the reproof he gave them for it, ver. 60—65. VI. The apostasy of many from him, and his discourse with his disciples that adhered to him upon that occasion, ver. 66—71.

AFTER these things Jesus went
over the sea of Galilee, which
is *the sea* of Tiberias. 2 And a great
multitude followed him, because they
saw his miracles which he did on
them that were diseased. 3 And Je-
sus went up into a mountain, and
there he sat with his disciples. 4
And the passover, a feast of the Jews,
was nigh. 5 When Jesus then lifted
up *his* eyes, and saw a great company
come unto him, he saith unto Philip,
Whence shall we buy bread, that
these may eat? 6 And this he said
to prove him: for he himself knew
what he would do. 7 Philip an-
swered him, Two hundred penny-
worth of bread is not sufficient for
them, that every one of them may
take a little. 8 One of his disciples,
Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith
unto him, 9 There is a lad here,
which hath five barley loaves, and
two small fishes: but what are they
among so many? 10 And Jesus said,
Make the men sit down. Now there
was much grass in the place. So the
men sat down, in number about five
thousand. 11 And Jesus took the
loaves; and when he had given
thanks, he distributed to the disci-
ples, and the disciples to them that
were set down; and likewise of the

fishes as much as they would. 12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. 13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. 14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

We have here an account of Christ's feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, which miracle is in *this* respect remarkable, that it is the only passage of the actions of *Christ's life* that is recorded by all the four evangelists. John, who does not usually relate what had been recorded by those who wrote before him, yet relates this, because of the reference the following discourse has to it. Observe,

I. The *place* and *time* where and when this miracle was wrought, which are noted for the greater evidence of the truth of the story; it is not said that it was done once upon a time, nobody knows where, but the circumstances are specified, that the fact might be enquired into.

1. The country that Christ was in (*v.* 1): *He went over the sea of Galilee*, called elsewhere *the lake of Gennesareth*, here *the sea of Tiberias*, from a city adjoining, which Herod had lately enlarged and beautified, and called so in honour of Tiberius the emperor, and probably had made his metropolis. Christ did not go directly over cross this inland sea, but made a *coasting* voyage to another place on the same side. It is not tempting God to choose to go *by water*, when there is convenience for it, even to those places whither we might go *by land;* for Christ never *tempted the Lord his God*, Matt. iv. 7.

2. The company that he was attended with: *A great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles*, *v.* 2. Note, (1.) Our Lord Jesus, while he went about *doing good*, lived continually in *a crowd*, which gave him more trouble than honour. Good and useful men must not complain of a *hurry* of business, when they are serving God and their generation; it will be time enough to *enjoy ourselves* when we come to that world where we shall *enjoy God*. (2.) Christ's miracles drew many *after him* that were not effectually drawn *to him*. They had their curiosity gratified by the strangeness of them, who had not their consciences convinced by the power of them.

3. Christ's posting himself advantageously to entertain them (*v.* 3): *He went up into a mountain*, and there he *sat with his disciples*, that he might the more conveniently be seen and heard by the multitude that crowded after him; this was a *natural* pulpit, and not, like Ezra's, made *for the purpose*. Christ was now driven to be a *field preacher;* but his word was never the worse, nor the less acceptable, for that, to those who knew how to value it, who followed him still, not only when he *went out* to a desert place, but when he *went up* to a mountain, though *up-hill* be *against heart*. He *sat* there, as teachers do *in cathedra—in the chair of instruction*. He did not sit at ease, not sit in state, yet he sat as one having authority, sat ready to receive addresses that were made to him; whoever would might come, and find him there. He sat *with his disciples;* he condescended to take them to *sit with him*, to put a reputation upon them before the people, and give them an earnest of the glory in which they should shortly sit with him. We are said to *sit with him*, Eph. ii. 6.

4. The time when it was. The first words, *After those things*, do not signify that this immediately followed what was related in the foregoing chapter, for it was a considerable time after, and they signify no more than in process of time; but we are told (*v.* 4) that it was *when the passover was nigh*, which is here noted, (1.) Because, perhaps, that had brought in all the apostles from their respective expeditions, whither they were sent as itinerant preachers, that they might attend their Master to Jerusalem, to keep the feast. (2.) Because it was a custom with the Jews religiously to observe the approach of the passover *thirty days* before, with some sort of solemnity; so long before they had it in their eye, repaired the roads, mended bridges, if there was occasion, and discoursed of the passover and the institution of it. (3.) Because, perhaps, the approach of the passover, when every one knew Christ would go up to Jerusalem, and be absent for some time, made the multitude flock the more after him and attend the more diligently on him. Note, The prospect of losing our opportunities should quicken us to improve them with double diligence; and, when solemn ordinances are approaching, it is good to prepare for them by conversing with the word of Christ.

II. The miracle itself. And here observe,

1. The notice Christ took of the crowd that attended him (*v.* 5): He *lifted up his eyes*, and *saw a great company come to him*, poor, mean, ordinary people, no doubt, for such make up the multitudes, especially in such remote corners of the country; yet Christ showed himself pleased with their attendance, and concerned for their welfare, to teach us to *condescend to those of low estate*, and not to *set* those *with the dogs of our flock* whom Christ hath set with the lambs of his. The souls of the poor are as precious to Christ, and should be so to us, as those of the rich.

2. The enquiry he made concerning the way of providing for them. He directed himself to Philip, who had been his disciple from the first, and had seen all his miracles, and particularly that of his turning water into wine, and therefore it might be expected that he should have said, "Lord, if thou wilt, it is easy to thee to feed them all." Those that, like Israel, have been witnesses of Christ's works, and have shared in the benefit of them, are inexcusable if they say, *Can he furnish a table in the wilderness?* Philip was of Bethsaida, in the neighbourhood of which town Christ now was, and therefore he was most likely to help them to provision at the best hand; and probably much of the company was known to him, and he was concerned for them. Now Christ asked, *Whence shall we buy bread, that these* may eat? (1.) He takes it for granted that they must all *eat with him.* One would think that when he had taught and healed them he had done his part; and that now they should rather have been contriving how to treat him and his disciples, for some of the people were probably *rich,* and we are sure that Christ and his disciples were *poor;* yet he is solicitous to entertain them. Those that will accept Christ's spiritual gifts, instead of *paying* for them, shall be *paid* for their acceptance of them. Christ, having fed their souls with the bread of life, feeds their bodies also with *food convenient,* to show that the Lord is for the body, and to encourage us to pray for our daily bread, and to set us an example of compassion to the poor, James ii. 15, 16. (2.) His enquiry is, *Whence shall we buy bread?* One would think, considering his poverty, that he should rather have asked, *Where shall we have money to buy for them?* But he will rather lay out all he has than they shall want. He will buy to give, and we must *labour,* that we may give, Eph. iv. 28.

3. The design of this enquiry; it was only to try the faith of Philip, *for he himself knew what he would do, v.* 6. Note, (1.) Our Lord Jesus is never at a loss in his counsels; but, how difficult soever the case is, he knows what he has to do and what course he will take, Acts xv. 18. *He knows the thoughts he has towards his people* (Jer. xxix. 11) and is never at uncertainty; when we know not, he *himself knows what he will do.* (2.) When Christ is pleased to *puzzle* his people, it is only with a design to *prove* them. The question put Philip to a nonplus, yet Christ proposed it, to try whether he would say, "Lord, if thou wilt exert thy power for them, we need not buy bread."

4. Philip's answer to this question: "*Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient, v.* 7. Master, it is to no purpose to talk of buying bread for them, for neither will the country afford so much bread, nor can we afford to lay out so much money; ask Judas, who carries the bag." Two hundred pence of *their* money amount to about six pounds of *ours,* and, if they lay out all that at once, it will exhaust their fund, and break them, and they must starve themselves. Grotius computes that *two hundred pennyworth of bread* would scarcely reach to *two thousand,* but Philip would go as near hand as he could, would have *every one to take a little;* and nature, we say, is content with a little. See the weakness of Philip's faith, that in this strait, as if the Master of the family had been an *ordinary person,* he looked for supply only in an *ordinary way.* Christ might now have said to him, as he did afterwards, Have I *been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* Or, as God to Moses in a like case, *Is the Lord's hand waxen short?* We are apt thus to distrust God's power when visible and ordinary means fail, that is, to trust him no further than we can see him.

5. The information which Christ received from another of his disciples concerning the provision they had. It was Andrew, here said to be *Simon Peter's brother;* though he was senior to Peter in discipleship, and instrumental to bring Peter to Christ, yet Peter afterwards so far outshone him that he is described by his relation to Peter: he acquainted Christ with what they had at hand; and in this we may see,

(1.) The *strength* of his *love* to those for whom he saw his Master concerned, in that he was willing to bring out all they had, though he knew not but they might want themselves, and any one would have said, *Charity begins at home.* He did not go about to conceal it, under pretence of being a better husband of their provision than the Master was, but honestly gives in an account of all they had. There is a lad here, παιδάριον—*a little lad,* probably one that used to follow this company, as suttlers do the camp, with provisions to sell, and the disciples had bespoken what he had for themselves; and it was *five barley-loaves,* and two small fishes. Here, [1.] The provision was *coarse* and *ordinary;* they were *barley loaves.* Canaan was a *land of wheat* (Deut. viii. 8); its inhabitants were commonly fed with the finest wheat (Ps. lxxxi. 16), the kidneys of wheat (Deut. xxxii. 14); yet Christ and his disciples were glad of *barley-bread.* It does not follow hence that we should tie ourselves to such coarse fare, and place religion in it (when God brings that which is finer to our hands, let us receive it, and be thankful); but it does follow that therefore we must not be *desirous of dainties* (Prov. xxiii. 3); nor murmur if we be reduced to coarse fare, but be content and thankful, and well reconciled to it; barley-bread is what Christ *had,* and better than we *deserve.* Nor let us despise the mean provision of the poor, nor look upon it with contempt, remembering how Christ was provided for. [2.] It was but *short* and *scanty;* there were but *five loaves,* and those so small that one little lad carried them all; and we find (2 Kings iv. 42, 43) that *twenty barley-loaves,*

with some other provision to help out, would not dine a hundred men without a miracle. There were but two fishes, and those *small* ones (δύο ὀψάρια), so small that one of them was but a morsel, *pisciculi assati.* I take the fish to have been *pickled,* or *soused,* for they had not fire to dress them with. The provision of *bread* was *little,* but that of *fish* was *less* in proportion to it, so that many a bit of dry bread they must eat before they could make a meal of this provision; but they were content with it. *Bread* is meat for our hunger; but of those that murmured for flesh it is said, *They asked meat for their lust,* Ps. lxxviii. 18. Well, Andrew was willing that the people should have this, as far as it would go. Note, A distrustful fear of wanting ourselves should not hinder us from needful charity to others.

(2.) See here the *weakness* of his *faith* in that word, "*But what are they among so many?* To offer this to such a multitude is but to mock them." Philip and he had not that actual consideration of the power of Christ (of which they had had such large experience) which they should have had. Who fed the camp of Israel in the wilderness? He that could make *one man chase a thousand* could make one loaf feed a thousand.

6. The directions Christ gave the disciples to seat the guests (*v.* 10): "*Make the men sit down,* though you have nothing to set before them, and trust me for that." This was like *sending providence* to *market,* and going to buy without money: Christ would thus try their obedience. Observe, (1.) The furniture of the dining-room: *there was much grass in that place,* though a desert place; see how bountiful nature is, it *makes grass to grow upon the mountains,* Ps. cxlvii. 8. This grass was uneaten; God gives not only enough, but more than enough. Here was this plenty of grass where Christ was preaching; the gospel brings other blessings along with it: *Then shall the earth yield her increase,* Ps. lxvii. 6. This plenty of grass made the place the more commodious for those that must sit on the ground, and served them for cushions, or *beds* (as they called what they sat on at meat, Esth. i. 6), and, considering what Christ says of the grass of the field (Matt. vi. 29, 30), these beds excelled those of Ahasuerus: nature's pomp is the most glorious. (2.) The number of the guests: *About five thousand:* a great entertainment, representing that of the gospel, which is a *feast for all nations* (Isa. xxv. 6), a feast for all *comers.*

7. The distribution of the provision, *v.* 11. Observe,

(1.) It was done with thanksgiving: *He gave thanks.* Note, [1.] We ought to give thanks to God for our food, for it is a mercy to have it, and we have it from the hand of God, and must *receive it with thanksgiving,* 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5. And this is the sweetness of our creature-comforts, that they will furnish us with *matter,* and give us occasion, for that excellent duty of thanksgiving. [2.] Though our provision be coarse and scanty, though we have neither plenty nor dainty, yet we must give thanks to God for what we have.

(2.) It was distributed from the hand of Christ by the hands of his disciples, *v.* 11. Note, [1.] All our comforts come to us *originally* from the hand of Christ; whoever *brings* them, it is he that *sends* them, he distributes to those who distribute to us. [2.] In distributing the bread of life to those that follow him, he is pleased to make use of the ministration of his disciples; they are the servitors at Christ's table, or rather rulers in his household, to give to *every one his portion of meat in due season.*

(3.) It was done to universal satisfaction. They did not every one take a little, but all had *as much as they would;* not a short allowance, but a full meal; and considering how long they had fasted, with what an appetite they sat down, how agreeable this miraculous food may be supposed to have been, above common food, it was not a little that served them when they ate as much as they would and on free cost. Those whom Christ feeds with the bread of life he does not stint, Ps. lxxxi. 10. There were but *two small fishes,* and yet they had *of them* too *as much as they would.* He did not reserve them for the better sort of the guests, and put off the poor with dry bread, but treated them all alike, for they were all alike welcome. Those who call feeding upon fish *fasting* reproach the entertainment Christ here made, which was a *full feast.*

8. The care that was taken of the broken meat. (1.) The orders Christ gave concerning it (*v.* 12): *When they were filled,* and every man had within him a sensible witness to the truth of the miracle, Christ *said to the disciples,* the servants he employed, *Gather up the fragments.* Note, we must always take care that we make no waste of any of God's good creatures; for the grant we have of them, though large and full, is with this proviso, *wilful waste only excepted.* It is just with God to bring us to the want of that which we make waste of. The Jews were very careful not to lose any bread, nor let it fall to the ground, to be trodden upon. *Qui panem contemnit in gravem incidit paupertatem—He who despises bread falls into the depths of poverty,* was a saying among them. Though Christ could command supplies whenever he pleased, yet he would have the fragments gathered up. When we are filled we must remember that others want, and we may want. Those that would have wherewith to be *charitable* must be *provident.* Had this broken meat been left upon the grass, the beasts and fowls would have gathered it up; but that which is fit to be meat for men is wasted and lost if it be thrown to the brute-creatures. Christ did not order the broken meat to be gathered up till all were filled; we must not begin to hoard and lay up till all is laid out that ought to be,

for that is withholding more than is meet. Mr. Baxter notes here, "How much less should we lose God's word, or helps, or our time, or such greater mercies!" (2.) The observance of these orders (*v.* 13): *They filled twelve baskets with the fragments,* which was an evidence not only of the *truth* of the miracle, that they were fed, not with fancy, but with real food (witness those remains), but of the *greatness* of it; they were not only filled, but there was all this over and above. See how large the divine bounty is; it not only *fills* the cup, but makes it *run over;* bread enough, and to spare, in our Father's house. The fragments filled twelve baskets, one for each disciple; they were thus repaid with interest for their willingness to part with what they had for public service; see 2 Chron. xxxi. 10. The Jews lay it as a law upon themselves, when they have eaten a meal, to be sure to leave a piece of bread upon the table, upon which the blessing after meat may rest; for it is a curse upon the wicked man (Job xx. 21) that *there shall none of his meat be left.*

III. Here is the influence which this miracle had upon the people who tasted of the benefit of it (*v.* 14): *They said, This is of a truth that prophet.* Note, 1. Even the vulgar Jews with great assurance expected the Messiah to come into the world, and to be a *great prophet.* They speak here with assurance of his coming. The Pharisees despised them as *not knowing the law;* but, it should seem, they knew more of him that is the *end of the law* than the Pharisees did. 2. The miracles which Christ wrought did clearly demonstrate that he was the Messiah promised, a teacher come from God, the great prophet, and could not but convince the amazed spectators that this was he that should come. There were many who were convinced he was that prophet that should come into the world who yet did not cordially receive his doctrine, for they did not continue in it. Such a wretched incoherence and inconsistency there is between the faculties of the corrupt unsanctified soul, that it is possible for men to acknowledge that Christ is that prophet, and yet to turn a deaf ear to him.

15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. 16 And when even was *now* come, his disciples went down unto the sea, 17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. 18 And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. 19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. 20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. 21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

Here is, I. Christ's retirement from the multitude.

1. Observe what induced him to retire; because he perceived that those who acknowledged him to be that prophet that should come into the world would come, and *take him by force, to make him a king, v.* 15. Now here we have an instance,

(1.) Of the irregular zeal of some of Christ's followers; nothing would serve but they would make him *a king.* Now, [1.] This was *an act of zeal* for the honour of Christ, and against the contempt which the ruling part of the Jewish church put upon him. They were concerned to see so great a benefactor to the world so little esteemed in it; and therefore, since royal titles are counted the most illustrious, they would make him a king, knowing that the Messiah was to be a king; and if a prophet, like Moses, then a sovereign prince and lawgiver, like him; and, if they cannot set him up *upon the holy hill of Zion,* a *mountain* in Galilee shall serve for the present. Those whom Christ has feasted with the royal dainties of heaven should, in return for his favour, make him *their* king, and set him upon the throne in their souls: let him that has *fed* us *rule us.* But, [2.] It was an *irregular* zeal; for, *First,* It was grounded upon a mistake concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if it were to be *of this world,* and he must appear with outward pomp, a crown on his head, and an army at his foot; such a king as this they would make him, which was as great a disparagement to his glory as it would be to lacker gold or paint a ruby. Right notions of Christ's kingdom would keep us to right methods for advancing it. *Secondly,* It was excited by the love of the flesh; they would make *him* their king who could feed them so plentifully without their toil, and save them from the curse of *eating their bread in the sweat of their face.* *Thirdly,* It was intended to carry on a *secular* design; they hoped this might be a fair opportunity of shaking off the Roman yoke, of which they were weary. If they had one to head them who could victual an army cheaper than another could provide for a family, they were sure of the sinews of the war, and could not fail of success, and the recovery of their ancient liberties. Thus is religion often prostituted to a secular interest, and Christ is served only to *serve a turn,* Rom. xvi. 18. *Vix quæritur* Jesus *propter* Jesum, *sed propter aliud—Jesus is usually sought after for something else, not for his own sake.*—Augustine. Nay, *Fourthly,* It was a tumultuous, seditious attempt, and a

disturbance of the public peace; it would make the country a seat of war, and expose it to the resentments of the Roman power. *Fifthly*, It was contrary to the mind of our Lord Jesus himself; for they would take him *by force*, whether he would or no. Note, Those who force honours upon Christ which he has not required at their hands displease him, and do him the greatest dishonour. Those that say *I am of Christ*, in opposition to those that are of Apollos and Cephas (so making Christ the head of a party), take him by force, to make him a king, contrary to his own mind.

(2.) Here is an instance of the humility and self-denial of the Lord Jesus, that, when they would have made him a king, he *departed;* so far was he from countenancing the design that he effectually quashed it. Herein he has left a testimony, [1.] Against ambition and affectation of worldly honour, to which he was perfectly mortified, and has taught us to be so. Had they come to take him by force and make him a prisoner, he could not have been more industrious to abscond than he was when they would make him a king. Let us not then covet to be the *idols of the crowd*, nor be *desirous of vainglory*. [2.] Against faction and sedition, treason and rebellion, and whatever tends to disturb the peace of kings and provinces. By this it appears that he was no enemy to Cæsar, nor would have his followers be so, but the *quiet in the land;* that he would have his ministers decline every thing that looks *like* sedition, or looks *towards* it, and improve their interest only for their work's sake.

2. Observe *whither* he retired: *He departed again into a mountain*, εἰς τὸ ὄρος—*into the* mountain, the mountain where he had preached (*v.* 3), whence he came down into the plain, to feed the people, and then returned to it alone, to be private. Christ, though so useful in the places of concourse, yet chose sometimes to be alone, to teach us to sequester ourselves from the world now and then, for the more free converse with God and our own souls; and *never less alone*, says the serious Christian, *than when alone*. Public services must not jostle out private devotions.

II. Here is the disciples' distress at sea. *They that go down to the sea in ships, these see the works of the Lord, for he raiseth the stormy wind*, Ps. cvii. 23, 24. Apply this to these disciples.

1. Here is their *going down to the sea* in a ship (*v.* 16, 17): *When even was come*, and they had done their day's work, it was time to look homeward, and therefore they went aboard, and set sail for Capernaum. This they did by particular direction from their Master, with design (as it should seem) to get them out of the way of the temptation of countenancing those that would have made him a king.

2. Here is the *stormy wind* arising and *fulfilling the word of God*. They were Christ's disciples, and were now in the way of their duty, and Christ was now in the mount praying for them; and yet they were in this distress. The perils and afflictions of this present time may very well consist with our interest in Christ and his intercession. They had lately been feasted at Christ's table; but after the sun-shine of comfort expect a storm. (1.) *It was now dark;* this made the storm the more dangerous and uncomfortable. Sometimes the people of God are in trouble, and cannot see their way out; in the dark concerning the cause of their trouble, concerning the design and tendency of it, and what the issue will be. (2.) Jesus *was not come to them*. When they were in that storm (Matt. viii. 23, &c.) *Jesus was with them;* but now their beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone. The absence of Christ is the great aggravation of the troubles of Christians. (3.) The *sea arose by reason of a great wind*. It was calm and fair when they put to sea (they were not so presumptuous as to launch out in a storm), but it arose when they were *at sea*. In times of tranquillity we must prepare for trouble, for it may arise when we little think of it. Let it comfort good people, when they happen to be in storms at sea, that the disciples of Christ were so; and let the promises of a gracious God balance the threats of an angry sea. Though in a storm, and *in the dark*, they are no worse off than Christ's disciples were. Clouds and darkness sometimes surround the children of the light, and of the day.

3. Here is Christ's seasonable approach to them when they were in this peril, *v.* 19. *They had rowed* (being forced by the contrary winds to betake themselves to their oars) *about twenty-five or thirty furlongs*. The Holy Spirit that indicted this could have ascertained the number of furlongs precisely, but this, being only circumstantial, is left to be expressed according to the conjecture of the penman. And, when they were got off a good way at sea, they *see Jesus walking on the sea*. See here, (1.) The power Christ has over the laws and customs of nature, to control and dispense with them at his pleasure. It is natural for heavy bodies to sink in water, but Christ walked *upon* the water as upon dry land, which was more than Moses's dividing the water and walking *through* the water. (2.) The concern Christ has for his disciples in distress: *He drew nigh to the ship;* for *therefore* he walked upon the water, as he *rides upon the heavens, for the help of his people*, Deut. xxxiii. 26. He will not leave them comfortless when they seem to be *tossed with tempests* and *not comforted*. When they are banished (as John) into remote places, or shut up (as Paul and Silas) in close places, he will find access to them, and will be nigh them. (3.) The relief Christ gives to his disciples in their fears. They *were afraid*, more afraid of an apparition (for

so they supposed him to be) than of the winds and waves. It is more terrible to wrestle with the rulers of the darkness of this world than with a tempestuous sea. When they thought a demon haunted them, and perhaps was instrumental to raise the storm, they were more terrified than they had been while they saw nothing in it but what was natural. Note, [1.] Our real distresses are often much increased by our imaginary ones, the creatures of our own fancy. [2.] Even the approaches of comfort and deliverance are often so misconstrued as to become the occasions of fear and perplexity. We are often not only *worse frightened than hurt*, but *then* most *frightened* when we are ready to be *helped*. But, when they were in this fright, how affectionately did Christ silence their fears with that compassionate word (*v.* 20), *It is I, be not afraid!* Nothing is more powerful to convince sinners than that word, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest;* nothing more powerful to comfort saints than this, "*I am Jesus whom thou lovest;* it is I that love thee, and seek thy good; be not afraid of me, nor of the storm." When trouble is nigh Christ is nigh.

4. Here is their speedy arrival at the port they were bound for, *v.* 17. (1.) They *welcomed* Christ into the ship; they *willingly received him.* Note, Christ's absenting himself for a time is but so much the more to *endear himself*, at his return, to his disciples, who value his presence above any thing; see Cant. iii. 4. (2.) Christ brought them safely to the shore: *Immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.* Note, [1.] The ship of the church, in which the disciples of Christ have *embarked* themselves and their all, may be much shattered and distressed, yet it shall come safe to the harbour at last; *tossed* at sea, but not *lost;* cast down, but not destroyed; the bush burning, but not consumed. [2.] The power and presence of the church's King shall expedite and facilitate her deliverance, and conquer the difficulties which have baffled the skill and industry of all her other friends. The disciples had rowed hard, but could not make their point till they had got Christ in the ship, and then the work was *done suddenly.* If we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, have received him willingly, though the night be dark and the wind high, yet we may comfort ourselves with this, that we shall be at shore shortly, and are nearer to it than we think we are. Many a doubting soul is fetched to heaven by a pleasing surprise, or ever it is aware.

22 The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone; 23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:) 24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. 25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? 26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

In these verses we have,

I. The careful enquiry which the people made after Christ, *v.* 23, 24. They saw the disciples go to sea; they saw Christ retire to the mountain, probably with an intimation that he desired to be private for some time; but, their hearts being set upon *making him a king*, they way-laid his return, and *the day following*, the hot fit of their zeal still continuing,

1. They were *much at a loss* for him. He was gone, and they knew not what was become of him. They saw there was *no boat there* but that in which the disciples went off, Providence so ordering it for the confirming of the miracle of his walking on the sea, for there was no boat for him to go in. They observed also that *Jesus did not go with his disciples*, but that they went off alone, and left him among *them* on *their* side of the water. Note, those that would find Christ must diligently observe all his motions, and learn to understand the tokens of his presence and absence, that they may steer accordingly.

2. They were very *industrious in seeking* him. They searched the places thereabouts, and when *they saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples* (neither he nor any one that could give tidings of him), they resolved to search elsewhere. Note, Those that would find Christ must accomplish a diligent search, must seek till they find, must go from sea to sea, to seek the word of God, rather than live without it; and those whom Christ has feasted with the bread of life should have their souls carried out in earnest desires towards him. Much would have more, in communion with Christ. Now, (1.) They resolved to go to Capernaum in quest of him. There were his head-quarters, where he

usually resided. Thither his disciples were gone; and they knew he would not be long absent from *them*. Those that would find Christ must go forth by the footsteps of the flock. (2.) Providence favoured them with an opportunity of going thither by sea, which was the speediest way; for there *came other boats from Tiberias*, which lay further off upon the same shore, *nigh*, though not so nigh to the place where they did *eat bread*, in which they might soon make a trip to Capernaum, and probably the boats were bound for that port. Note, Those that in sincerity seek Christ, and seek opportunities of converse with him, are commonly owned and assisted by Providence in those pursuits. The evangelist, having occasion to mention their eating the *multiplied* bread, adds, *After that the Lord had given thanks*, *v.* 11. So much were the disciples affected with their Master's giving thanks that they could never forget the impressions made upon them by it, but took a pleasure in remembering the gracious words that then proceeded out of his mouth. This was the grace and beauty of that meal, and made it remarkable; their hearts burned within them.

3. They laid hold of the opportunity that offered itself, and *they also took shipping, ana came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus*. They did not defer, in hopes to see him again *on this side the water;* but their convictions being strong, and their desires warm, they followed him presently. Good motions are often crushed, and come to nothing, for want of being *prosecuted* in *time*. They came to Capernaum, and, for aught that appears, these unsound hypocritical followers of Christ had a *calm* and *pleasant* passage, while his sincere disciples had a *rough* and *stormy* one. It is not strange if it fare worst with the best men in this evil world. They *came, seeking Jesus*. Note, Those that would find Christ, and find comfort in him, must be willing to take pains, and, as here, to *compass* sea and land to seek and serve him who came from heaven to earth to seek and save us.

II. The success of this enquiry: *They found him on the other side of the sea*, *v.* 25. Note, Christ will be found of those that seek him, first or last; and it is worth while to cross a sea, nay, to go *from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth*, to seek Christ, if we may but find him at last. These people appeared afterwards to be unsound, and not actuated by any good principle, and yet were thus zealous. Note, Hypocrites may be very forward in their attendance on God's ordinances. If men have *no more* to show for their love to Christ than their running after sermons and prayers, and their pangs of affection to good preaching, they have reason to suspect themselves no better than this *eager crowd*. But though these people were no better principled, and Christ knew it, yet he was willing to be found of them, and admitted them into fellowship with him. If we could know the hearts of hypocrites, yet, while their profession is plausible, we must not exclude them from our communion, much less when we do not know their hearts.

III. The question they put to him when they found him: *Rabbi, when camest thou hither?* It should seem by *v.* 59 that they found him *in the synagogue*. They knew this was the likeliest place to seek Christ in, for it was *his custom* to attend public assemblies for religious worship, Luke iv. 16. Note, Christ must be sought, and will be found, in the congregations of his people and in the administration of his ordinances; public worship is what Christ chooses to own and grace with his presence and the manifestations of himself. There they found him, and all they had to say to him was, *Rabbi, when camest thou hither?* They saw he would not be made a king, and therefore say no more of this, but call him Rabbi, their teacher. Their enquiry refers not only to the *time*, but to the *manner*, of his conveying himself thither; not only *When*, but, "*How*, camest thou hither?" for there was no boat for him to come in. They were curious in asking concerning Christ's motions, but not solicitous to observe their own.

IV. The answer Christ gave them, not direct to their question (what was it to them *when* and *how* he came thither?) but such an answer as their case required.

1. He discovers the *corrupt principle* they *acted from* in following him (*v.* 26): "*Verily, verily, I say unto you*, I that search the heart, and know what is in man, I the Amen, the faithful witness, Rev. iii. 14, 15. *You seek me;* that is well, but it is not from a good principle." Christ knows not only *what* we do, but *why* we do it. These followed Christ, (1.) Not for his doctrine's sake: *Not because you saw the miracles*. The miracles were the great confirmation of his doctrine; Nicodemus sought for him for the sake of them (*ch.* iii. 2), and argued from the power of his works to the truth of his word; but these were so stupid and mindless that they never considered this. But, (2.) It was for their own bellies' sake: *Because you did eat of the loaves, and were filled;* not because he taught them, but because he fed them. He had given them, [1.] A *full* meal's meat: *They did eat, and were filled;* and some of them perhaps were so poor that they had not known of a long time before now what it was to have enough, to eat and leave. [2.] A *dainty* meal's meat; it is probable that, as the miraculous wine was the best wine, so was the miraculous food more than usually pleasant. [3.] A *cheap* meal's meat, that cost them nothing; no reckoning was brought in. Note, Many follow Christ for *loaves*, and not for *love*. Thus those do who aim at secular advantage in their profession of religion, and follow it because by this craft they get their preferments. *Quanti profuit nobis hæc*

fabula de Christo—This fable respecting Christ, what a gainful concern we have made of it! said one of the popes. These people *complimented* Christ with Rabbi, and showed him great respect, yet he told them thus faithfully of their hypocrisy; his ministers must hence learn not to flatter those that flatter them, nor to be *bribed* by fair words to cry *peace* to all that cry *rabbi* to them, but to give faithful reproofs where there is cause for them.

2. He directs them to better principles (*v.* 27): *Labour for that meat which endures to everlasting life.* With the woman of Samaria he had discoursed of spiritual things under the similitude of *water;* here he speaks of them under the similitude of *meat,* taking occasion from the loaves they had eaten. His design is,

(1.) To moderate our worldly pursuits: *Labour not for the meat that perishes.* This does not forbid honest labour for food convenient, 2 Thess. iii. 12. But we must not make the things of this world our chief care and concern. Note, [1.] The things of the world are *meat that perishes.* Worldly wealth, honour, and pleasure, are *meat;* they *feed the fancy* (and many times this is all) and *fill the belly.* These are things which men *hunger* after as *meat,* and glut themselves with, and which a carnal heart, as long as they last, may make a shift to live upon; but they *perish,* are of a perishing nature, wither of themselves, and are exposed to a thousand accidents; those that have the largest share of them are not sure to have them while they live, but are sure to leave them and lose them when they die. [2.] It is therefore folly for us inordinately to labour after them. *First,* We must not labour in religion, nor work the works thereof, *for this perishing meat,* with an eye to this; we must not make our religion subservient to a worldly interest, nor aim at *secular advantages* in *sacred exercises. Secondly,* We must not at all *labour* for this meat; that is, we must not make these perishing things our *chief good,* nor make our care and pains about them our *chief business;* not seek those things *first* and *most,* Prov. xxiii. 4, 5.

(2.) To quicken and excite our gracious pursuits: "Bestow your pains to better purpose, and *labour for that meat* which belongs to the soul," of which he shows,

[1.] That it is *unspeakably desirable:* It is meat which *endures to everlasting life;* it is a happiness which will last as long as we must, which not only itself endures eternally, but will nourish us up to everlasting life. The blessings of the new covenant are our preparative for eternal life, our preservative to it, and the pledge and earnest of it.

[2.] It is *undoubtedly attainable.* Shall all the treasures of the world be ransacked, and all the fruits of the earth gathered together, to furnish us with provisions that will last to eternity? No, *The sea saith, It is not in me,* among all the treasures hidden in the sand. *It cannot be gotten for gold;* but it is that *which the Son of man shall give;* ἣν δώσει, either which *meat,* or which *life,* the Son of man shall give. Observe here, *First,* Who gives this meat: the *Son of man,* the great householder and master of the stores, who is entrusted with the administration of the kingdom of God among men, and the dispensation of the gifts, graces, and comforts of that kingdom, and has power to give eternal life, with all the means of it and preparatives for it. We are told to *labour for it,* as if it were to be got by our own industry, and sold upon that valuable consideration, as the heathen said, *Dii laboribus omnia vendunt—The gods sell all advantages to the industrious.* But, when we have laboured ever so much for it, we have not merited it as our *hire,* but the Son of man *gives it.* And what more free than gift? It is an encouragement that he who has the giving of it is the *Son of man,* for then we may hope the *sons of men* that seek it, and labour for it, shall not fail to have it. *Secondly,* What authority he has to give it; for *him has God the Father sealed,* τοῦτον γὰρ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐσφράγισεν, ὁ Θεός—*for him the Father has sealed* (proved and evidenced) *to be God;* so some read it; he has declared him to be the Son of God with power. He has *sealed him,* that is, has given him full authority to deal between God and man, as God's *ambassador* to man and man's *intercessor* with God, and has proved his commission by miracles. Having given him *authority,* he has given us *assurance* of it; having entrusted him with *unlimited powers,* he has satisfied us with *undoubted proofs* of them; so that as he might go on with confidence in his undertaking for us, so may we in our resignations to him. *God the Father* sealed him with the Spirit that rested on him, by the voice from heaven, by the testimony he bore to him in signs and wonders. Divine revelation is perfected in him, in him the *vision* and *prophecy* is *sealed up* (Dan. ix. 24), to him all believers *seal* that he is true (*ch.* iii. 33), and in him they are all *sealed,* 2 Cor. i. 22.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. 30 They said therefore unto him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? 31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that

bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. 41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? 43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. 47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Whether this conference was with the Capernaites, in whose synagogue Christ now was, or with those who came from the other side of the sea, is not certain nor material; however, it is an instance of Christ's condescension that he gave them leave to ask him questions, and did not resent the interruption as an affront, no, not from his common hearers, though not his immediate followers. Those that would be apt to teach must be swift to hear, and study to answer. It is the wisdom of teachers, when they are asked even impertinent unprofitable questions, thence to take occasion to answer in that which is profitable, that the question may be rejected, but not the request. Now,

I. Christ having told them that *they* must *work for the meat* he spoke of, must *labour* for it, they enquire what work they must do, and he answers them, *v.* 28, 29. 1. Their *enquiry* was *pertinent* enough (*v.* 28): *What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?* Some understand it as a pert question: "What works of God can we do more and better than those we do in obedience to the law of Moses?" But I rather take it as a humble serious question, showing them to be, at least for the present, in a good mind, and willing to know and do their duty; and I imagine that those who asked this question, How and What (*v.* 30), and made the request (*v.* 34), were not the same persons with those that murmured (*v.* 41, 42), and strove (*v.* 52),

for those are expressly called *the Jews*, who came out of Judea (for those were strictly called Jews) to cavil, whereas these were of Galilee, and came to be taught. This question here intimates that they were convinced that those who would obtain this everlasting meat, (1.) Must aim to do something great. Those who *look high* in their expectations, and hope to enjoy the *glory of God*, must *aim high* in those endeavours, and study to *do the works of God*, works which he requires and will accept, *works of God*, distinguished from the works of worldly men in their worldly pursuits. It is not enough to speak the words of God, but we must do the works of God. (2.) Must be willing to do any thing: *What shall we do?* Lord, I am ready to do whatever thou shalt appoint, though ever so displeasing to flesh and blood, Acts ix. 6. 2. Christ's answer was plain enough (*v.* 29): *This is the work of God that ye believe.* Note, (1.) The work of faith is the work of God. They enquire after the *works* of God (in the plural number), being careful about *many things;* but Christ directs them to one work, which includes all, the one thing needful: that *you believe*, which supersedes all the works of the ceremonial law; the work which is necessary to the acceptance of all the other works, and which produces them, for without faith you cannot please God. It is *God's work*, for it is of his *working in us*, it subjects the soul to his working on us, and quickens the soul in working *for him.* (2.) That faith is the work of God which closes with Christ, and relies upon him. It is to *believe on him* as one whom God *hath sent*, as God's commissioner in the great affair of peace between God and man, and as such to *rest* upon him, and *resign ourselves* to him. See *ch.* xiv. 1.

II. Christ having told them that the *Son of man* would *give them this meat*, they enquire concerning him, and he answers their enquiry.

1. Their enquiry is after *a sign* (*v.* 30): *What sign showest thou?* Thus far they were right, that, since he required them to give him *credit*, he should produce his *credentials*, and make it out by miracle that he was *sent of God.* Moses having confirmed his mission by *signs*, it was requisite that Christ, who came to set aside the ceremonial law, should in like manner confirm his: "*What dost thou work?* What dost thou drive at? What lasting characters of a divine power dost thou design to leave upon thy doctrine?" But *herein* they missed it,

(1.) That they overlooked the many miracles which they had seen wrought by him, and which amounted to an abundant proof of his divine mission. Is this a time of day to ask, "What sign showest thou?" especially at Capernaum, the *staple* of miracles, where he had done so *many mighty works, signs* so significant of his office and undertaking? Were not these very persons but the other day miraculously fed by him? None so blind as they that will not see; for they may be so blind as to question whether it be day or no, when the sun shines in their faces.

(2.) That they preferred the miraculous feeding of Israel in the wilderness before all the miracles Christ wrought (*v.* 31): *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert;* and, to strengthen the objection, they quote a scripture for it: *He gave them bread from heaven* (taken from Ps. lxxviii. 24), *he gave them of the corn of heaven.* What a good use might be made of this story to which they here refer! It was a memorable instance of God's power and goodness, often mentioned to the glory of God (Neh. xix. 20, 21), yet see how these people perverted it, and made an ill use of it. [1.] Christ reproved them for their fondness of the miraculous bread, and bade them not set their hearts upon *meat which perisheth;* "Why," say they, "*meat for the belly* was the great good thing that God gave to our fathers in the desert; and why should not we then labour for that meat? If God made much of them, why should not we be for those that will make much of us?" [2.] Christ had fed five thousand men with five loaves, and had given them that as one sign to prove him *sent of God;* but, under colour of *magnifying* the miracles of Moses, they tacitly *undervalue* this miracle of Christ, and *evade* the evidence of it. "Christ fed his thousands; but Moses his hundreds of thousands; Christ fed them but once, and then reproved those who followed him in hope to be still fed, and put them off with a discourse of spiritual food; but Moses fed his followers forty years, and miracles were not their rarities, but their daily bread: Christ fed them with bread out of *the earth*, barley-bread, and fishes out of *the sea;* but Moses fed Israel with bread *from heaven*, angel's food." Thus big did these Jews talk of the *manna* which *their fathers did eat;* but their fathers had slighted it as much as they did now the barley-loaves, and called it *light bread*, Num. xxi. 5. Thus apt are we to slight and overlook the appearances of God's power and grace in our own times, while we pretend to admire the wonders of which *our fathers told us.* Suppose *this* miracle of Christ was outdone by that of Moses, yet there were other instances in which Christ's miracles outshone his; and, besides, all true miracles prove a divine doctrine, though not equally illustrious in the circumstances, which were ever *diversified* according as the occasion did require. As much as the manna excelled the barley-loaves, so much, and much more, did the doctrine of Christ excel the law of Moses, and his heavenly institutions the carnal ordinances of that dispensation.

2. Here is Christ's reply to this enquiry, wherein,

(1.) He *rectifies* their *mistake* concerning the *typical* manna. It was true that their fathers did eat *manna* in the desert. But,

[1.] It was not Moses that gave it to them, nor were they obliged to him for it; he was but the instrument, and therefore they must look beyond him to God. We do not find that Moses did so much as pray to God for the *manna;* and he spoke unadvisedly when he said, *Must we fetch water out of the rock?* Moses gave them not either *that* bread or *that* water. [2.] It was not given them, as they imagined, *from heaven,* from the highest heavens, but only from *the clouds,* and therefore not so much superior to that which had its rise from the earth as they thought. Because the scripture saith, *He gave them bread from heaven,* it does not follow that it was *heavenly bread,* or was intended to be the nourishment of souls. Misunderstanding scripture language occasions many mistakes in the things of God.

(2.) He *informs* them concerning the *true* manna, of which that was a type: *But my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven;* that which is truly and properly the *bread from heaven,* of which the manna was but a shadow and figure, is *now given,* not to *your fathers,* who are dead and gone, but *to you* of this present age, for whom the *better things were reserved:* he is *now giving* you that *bread from heaven,* which is *truly* so called. As much as the throne of God's glory is above the clouds of the air, so much does the *spiritual bread* of the everlasting gospel excel the *manna.* In calling God *his Father,* he proclaims himself greater than Moses; for Moses was faithful but as a servant, Christ as a *Son,* Heb. iii. 5, 6.

III. Christ, having replied to their enquiries, takes further occasion from their objection concerning the *manna* to discourse of *himself* under the similitude of *bread,* and of *believing* under the similitude of *eating and drinking;* to which, together with his putting both together in the *eating* of *his flesh* and *drinking* of his *blood,* and with the remarks made upon it by the hearers, the rest of this conference may be reduced.

1. Christ having spoken of *himself* as the great *gift of God,* and the *true bread* (*v.* 32), largely *explains* and *confirms* this, that we may rightly know him.

(1.) He here shows that he is the *true bread;* this he repeats again and again, *v.* 33, 35, 48—51. Observe, [1.] That Christ is *bread,* is that to the soul which bread is to the body, nourishes and supports the spiritual life (is the staff of it) as bread does the bodily life; *it is the staff of life.* The doctrines of the gospel concerning Christ—that he is the Mediator between God and man, that he is our peace, our righteousness, our Redeemer; *by these things do men live.* Our bodies could better live without food than our souls without Christ. *Bread-corn* is *bruised* (Isa. xxviii. 28), so was Christ; he was born at Bethlehem, the *house of bread,* and typified by the *show-bread.* [2.] That he is the *bread of God* (*v.* 33), divine bread; it is he that is *of God* (*v* 46), bread which my Father gives (*v.* 32), which he has made to be the food of our souls; the bread of God's family, his *children's bread.* The Levitical sacrifices are called the *bread of God* (Lev. xxi. 21, 22), and Christ is the great sacrifice; Christ, in his word and ordinances, the *feast* upon the sacrifice. [3.] That he is the *bread of life* (*v.* 35, and again, *v.* 48), *that* bread of life, alluding to the tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden, which was to Adam the seal of that part of the covenant, *Do this and live,* of which he might *eat and live.* Christ is the bread of life, for he is the fruit of the *tree of life. First,* He is the *living bread* (so he explains himself, *v.* 51): *I am the living bread.* Bread is itself a dead thing, and nourishes not but by the help of the faculties of a living body; but Christ is himself *living bread,* and nourishes by his own power. Manna was a dead thing; if kept but one night, it putrefied and bred worms; but Christ is ever living, everlasting bread, that never moulds, nor waxes old. The doctrine of Christ crucified is now as strengthening and comforting to a believer as ever it was, and his mediation still of as much value and efficacy as ever. *Secondly, He gives life unto the world* (*v.* 33), spiritual and eternal life; the life of the soul in union and communion with God here, and in the vision and fruition of him hereafter; a life that includes in it all happiness. The *manna* did only preserve and support life, did not preserve and perpetuate life, much less restore it; but Christ *gives* life to those that were dead in sin. The manna was ordained only for the life of the Israelites, but Christ is given for the *life of the world;* none are excluded from the benefit of this bread, but such as exclude themselves. Christ came to *put life* into the minds of men, principles productive of acceptable performances. [4.] That he is the *bread which came down from heaven;* this is often repeated here, *v.* 33, 50, 51, 58. This denotes, *First,* The divinity of Christ's person. As God, he had a being in heaven, whence he came to take our nature upon him: *I came down from heaven,* whence we may infer his *antiquity,* he was in the beginning with God; his *ability,* for heaven is the firmament of power; and his *authority,* he came with a divine commission. *Secondly,* The divine original of all that good which flows to us through him. He *comes,* not only καταβάς—*that came down* (*v.* 51), but καταβαίνωι—*that comes down;* he is descending, denoting a constant communication of light, life, and love, from God to believers through Christ, as the *manna* descended daily; see Eph. i. 3. *Omnia desuper—All things from above.* [5.] That he is *that bread* of which the *manna* was a type and figure (*v.* 58), *that* bread, the true bread, *v.* 32. As the rock that they drank of was Christ, so was the manna they ate of *spiritual bread,* 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. *Manna* was given to Israel; so Christ to the spiritual Israel. There was *manna*

enough for them all; so in Christ a fulness of grace for all believers; he that *gathers much* of this *manna* will have none to spare when he comes to use it; and he that gathers little, when his grace comes to be perfected in glory, shall find that *he has no lack. Manna* was to be gathered in the morning; and those that would find Christ must *seek him early*. Manna was sweet, and, as the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* tells us (Wisd. xvi. 20), was agreeable to every palate; and to those that believe Christ is *precious*. Israel lived upon *manna* till they came to Canaan; and Christ is our life. There was a memorial of the *manna* preserved in the ark; so of Christ in the Lord's supper, as the food of souls.

(2.) He here shows what his undertaking was, and what his errand into the world. Laying aside the metaphor, he speaks plainly, and speaks no proverb, giving us an account of his business among men, *v.* 38—40.

[1.] He assures us, in general, that he came from heaven upon his Father's business (*v.* 38), not to *do his own will, but the will of him that sent him.* He *came from heaven*, which bespeaks him an intelligent active being, who voluntarily descended to this lower world, a long journey, and a great step downward, considering the glories of the world he came from and the calamities of the world he came to; we may well ask with wonder, "What moved him to such an expedition?" Here he tells us that he came to do, not *his own will*, but the will of his Father; not that he had any will that stood in competition with the will of his Father, but those to whom he spoke suspected he might. "No," saith he, "my own will is not the spring I act from, nor the rule I go by, but I am come to *do the will of him that sent me.*" That is, *First*, Christ did not come into the world as a *private* person, that acts for himself only, but under a *public character*, to act for others as an ambassador, or plenipotentiary, authorized by a public commission; he came into the world as God's great agent and the world's great physician. It was not any private business that brought him hither, but he came to settle affairs between parties no less considerable than the great Creator and the whole creation. *Secondly*, Christ, when he was in the world, did not carry on any *private* design, nor had any *separate interest* at all, distinct from theirs for whom he acted. The scope of his whole life was to glorify God and do good to men. He therefore never consulted his own ease, safety, or quiet; but, when he was to lay down his life, though he had a human nature which startled at it, he set aside the consideration of that, and resolved his will as man into the will of God: *Not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

[2.] He acquaints us, in particular, with that will of the Father which he came to do; he here *declares the decree*, the instructions he was to pursue.

First, The *private instructions* given to Christ, that he should be sure to save all the chosen remnant; and this is the *covenant of redemption* between the Father and the Son (*v.* 38): *This is the Father's will, who hath sent me;* this is the charge I am entrusted with, that *of all whom he hath given me I should lose none.*" Note, 1. There is a certain number of the children of men *given* by the Father to Jesus Christ, to be his care, and so to be to him for a name and a praise; given him for *an inheritance*, for a possession. Let him do all that for them which their case requires; teach them, and heal them, pay their debt, and plead their cause, prepare them for, and preserve them to, eternal life, and then let him make his best of them. The Father might dispose of them as he pleased: as creatures, their lives and beings were *derived from* him; as sinners, their lives and beings were *forfeited to him.* He might have sold them for the satisfaction of his justice, and delivered them *to the tormentors;* but he pitched upon them to be the monuments of his mercy, and delivered them to the Saviour. Those whom God chose to be the objects of his special love he lodged as a trust in the hands of Christ. 2. Jesus Christ has undertaken that he will *lose none* of those that were thus *given him* of the Father. The *many sons* whom he was to *bring to glory* shall all be forth-coming, and none of them missing, Matt. xviii. 14. None of them shall be lost for want of a sufficient price to purchase them or sufficient grace to sanctify them. *If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever*, Gen. xliii. 9. 3. Christ's undertaking for those that are given him extends to the resurrection of their bodies *I will raise it up again at the last day*, which supposes all that goes before, but this is to crown and complete the undertaking. The body is a part of the man, and therefore a part of Christ's purchase and charge; it pertains to the promises, and therefore it shall not be *lost.* The undertaking is not only that he shall *lose none*, no *person*, but that he shall *lose nothing*, no part of the person, and therefore not the body. Christ's undertaking will never be accomplished till the resurrection, when the souls and bodies of the saints shall be re-united and gathered to Christ, that he may present them to the Father: *Behold I, and the children that thou hast given me*, Heb. ii. 13; 2 Tim. i. 12. 4. The spring and original of all this is the *sovereign will of God*, the counsels of his will, according to which he works all this. This was the commandment he gave to his Son, when he sent him into the world, and to which the Son always had an eye.

Secondly, The *public instructions* which were to be given to the children of men, in what way, and upon what terms, they might obtain salvation by Christ; and this is the *covenant of grace* between God and man. Who the particular persons were that were

given to Christ is a *secret: The Lord knows them that are his*, we do not, nor is it fit we should; but, though their names are concealed, their characters are published. An offer is made of life and happiness upon gospel terms, that by it those that were given to Christ might be brought to him, and others left inexcusable (*v.* 40): "*This is the will*, the revealed will, *of him that sent me*, the method agreed upon, upon which to proceed with the children of men, that *every one*, Jew or Gentile, that *sees the Son, and believes on him*, may have *everlasting life*, and *I will raise him up.*" This is *gospel* indeed, good news. Is it not reviving to hear this? 1. That *eternal life* may be had, if it be not our own fault; that whereas, upon the sin of the first Adam, the *way of the tree of life* was blocked up, by the grace of the second Adam it is laid open again. The crown of glory is set before us as the prize of our high calling, which we may run for and obtain. 2. Every one may have it. This gospel is to be preached, this offer made, to all, and none can say, "It belongs not to me," Rev. xxii. 17. 3. This everlasting life is sure to all those who believe in Christ, and to them only. He that *sees the Son*, and *believes on him*, shall be saved. Some understand this *seeing* as a *limitation* of this condition of salvation to those only that have the revelation of Christ and his grace made to them. Every one that has the opportunity of being acquainted with Christ, and improves this so well as to *believe* in him, shall have everlasting life, so that none shall be condemned for unbelief (however they may be for other sins) but those who have had the gospel preached to them, who, like these Jews here (*v.* 36), have *seen*, and yet have *not* believed; have known Christ, and yet not trusted in him. But I rather understand *seeing* here to mean the same thing with *believing*, for it is θεωρῶν, which signifies not so much the sight of the eye (as *v.* 36, ἑωράκατέ με—*ye have seen me*) as the *contemplation of the mind.* Every one that *sees the Son*, that is, *believes on him*, sees him with an eye of faith, by which we come to be duly acquainted and affected with the doctrine of the gospel concerning him. It is to look upon him, as the stung Israelites upon the brazen serpent. It is not a *blind* faith that Christ requires, that we should be willing to have our *eyes put out*, and then follow him, but that we should *see him*, and see what ground we go upon in our faith. It is *then* right when it is not taken up upon *hearsay* (believing as the church believes), but is the result of a due consideration of, and insight into, the motives of credibility: *Now mine eye sees thee. We have heard him ourselves* 4. Those who believe in Jesus Christ, in order to their having everlasting life, shall be raised up by his power at the last day. He had it in charge as his Father's will (*v.* 39), and here he solemnly makes it his own undertaking: I *will raise him up*, which signifies not only the return of the body to life, but the putting of the *whole man* into a full possession of the eternal life promised.

2. Now Christ discoursing thus concerning himself, as the *bread of life* that came down from heaven, let us see what remarks his hearers made upon it.

(1.) When they heard of such a thing as the *bread of God*, which *gives life*, they heartily prayed for it (*v.* 34): *Lord, evermore give us this bread.* I cannot think that this is spoken scoffingly, and in a way of derision, as most interpreters understand it: "Give us such bread as this, if thou canst; let us be fed with it, not for one meal, as with the five loaves, but *evermore;*" as if this were no better a prayer than that of the impenitent thief: *If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us.* But I take this request to be made, though ignorantly, yet honestly, and to be well meant; for they call him *Lord*, and desire a share in what he *gives*, whatever he means by it. General and confused notions of divine things produce in carnal hearts some kind of desires towards them, and wishes of them; like Balaam's wish, to die the *death of the righteous.* Those who have an indistinct knowledge of the things of God, who see men as trees walking, make, as I may call them, *inarticulate* prayers for spiritual blessings. They think the favour of God a *good thing*, and heaven a *fine place*, and cannot but wish them their own, while they have no value nor desire at all for that holiness which is necessary both to the one and to the other. Let this be the desire of our souls; have we tasted that the Lord is gracious, been feasted with the word of God, and Christ in the word? let us say, "*Lord, evermore give us this bread;* let the bread of life be our daily bread, the heavenly manna our continual feast, and let us never know the want of it."

(2.) But, when they understood that by this *bread of life* Jesus meant *himself*, then they *despised* it. Whether they were the same persons that had prayed for it (*v.* 34), or some others of the company, does not appear; it seems to be some others, for they are called *Jews.* Now it is said (*v.* 41), *They murmured at him.* This comes in immediately after that solemn declaration which Christ had made of God's will and his own undertaking concerning man's salvation (*v.* 39, 40), which certainly were some of the most weighty and gracious words that ever proceeded out of the mouth of our Lord Jesus, the most faithful, and best worthy of all acceptation, One would think that, like Israel in Egypt, when they heard that God had thus *visited* them, they should have *bowed their heads and worshipped;* but on the contrary, instead of closing with the offer made them, they *murmured*, quarrelled with what Christ said, and, though they did not openly oppose and contradict it, yet they privately whispered among themselves in contempt of it, and instilled into one another's minds prejudices

against it. Many that will not professedly contradict the doctrine of Christ (their cavils are so weak and groundless that they are either ashamed to own them or afraid to have them silenced), yet say in their hearts that they *do not like it.* Now, [1.] That which offended them was Christ's asserting his origin to be *from heaven, v.* 41, 42. How is it that he saith, *I came down from heaven?* They had heard of angels coming down *from heaven,* but never of a man, overlooking the proofs he had given them of his being more than a man. [2.] That which they thought justified them herein was that they knew his extraction on earth: *Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?* They took it amiss that he should say that he came down from heaven, when he was *one of them.* They speak slightly of his blessed name, *Jesus: Is not this Jesus.* They take it for granted that Joseph was really his father, though he was only *reputed* to be so. Note, Mistakes concerning the person of Christ, as if he were a mere man, conceived and born by ordinary generation, occasion the offence that is taken at his doctrine and offices. Those who set him on a level with the other sons of men, whose father and mother we know, no wonder if they derogate from the honour of his satisfaction and the mysteries of his undertaking, and, like the Jews here, murmur at his promise to *raise us up at the last day.*

3. Christ, having spoken of faith as the great *work of God* (*v.* 29), discourses largely concerning this work, instructing and encouraging us in it.

(1.) He shows what it is to *believe in Christ.* [1.] To believe in Christ is to *come to Christ.* He that *comes to* me is the same with him that *believes in me* (*v.* 35), and again (*v.* 37): *He that comes unto me;* so *v.* 44, 45. Repentance towards God is *coming to him* (Jer. iii. 22) as our chief good and highest end; and so faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ is coming to him as our prince and Saviour, and our way to the Father. It denotes the out-goings of our affection towards him, for these are the motions of the soul, and actions agreeable; it is to *come off* from all those things that stand in opposition to him or competition with him, and to *come up* to those terms upon which life and salvation are offered to us through him. When he was here on earth it was more than barely coming where he was; so it is now more than coming to his word and ordinances. [2.] It is to *feed upon Christ* (*v* 51): *If any man eat of this bread.* The former denotes applying ourselves to Christ; this denotes applying Christ to ourselves, with appetite and delight, that we may receive life, and strength, and comfort from him. To feed on him as the Israelites on the manna, having quitted the *fleshpots* of Egypt, and not depending on the *labour of their hands* (to eat of that), but living purely on the bread given them from heaven.

(2.) He shows what is to be got by believing in Christ. What will he give us if we *come to him?* What shall we be the better if we *feed upon him? Want* and *death* are the chief things we dread; may we but be assured of the comforts of our being, and the continuance of it in the midst of these comforts, we have enough; now these two are here secured to true believers.

[1.] They shall never want, *never hunger, never thirst, v.* 35. Desires they have, earnest desires, but these so suitably, so seasonably, so abundantly satisfied, that they cannot be called hunger and thirst, which are uneasy and painful. Those that did eat manna, and drink of the rock, hungered and thirsted afterwards. Manna surfeited them; water out of the rock failed them. But there is such an *over-flowing fulness* in Christ as can never be *exhausted,* and there are such *ever-flowing communications* from him as can never be interrupted.

[2.] They shall *never die,* not die eternally; for, *First,* He that believes on Christ *has everlasting life* (*v.* 47); he has the assurance of it, the grant of it, the earnest of it; he has it in the promise and first-fruits. Union with Christ and communion with God in Christ are *everlasting life* begun. *Secondly,* Whereas they that did *eat manna* died, Christ is such bread as a man may eat of and never die, *v.* 49, 50. Observe here, 1. the insufficiency of the typical manna: *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.* There may be much good use made of the death of our fathers; their graves speak to us, and their monuments are our memorials, particularly of this, that the greatest *plenty* of the most *dainty* food will neither prolong the thread of life nor avert the stroke of death. Those that did eat manna, angel's food, died like other men. There could be nothing amiss in their diet, to shorten their days, nor could their deaths be hastened by the toils and fatigues of life (for they neither sowed nor reaped), and *yet they died.* (1.) Many of them died by the immediate strokes of God's vengeance for their unbelief and murmurings; for, *though they did eat that spiritual meat,* yet with many of them God *was not well pleased, but they were overthrown in the wilderness,* 1 Cor. x. 3—5. Their eating manna was no security to *them* from the *wrath of God,* as believing in Christ is to *us.* (2.) the rest of them died in a course of nature, and their carcases fell, under a divine sentence, in that wilderness where they did *eat manna.* In that very age when miracles were *daily bread* was the life of man reduced to the stint it now stands at, as appears, Ps. xc. 10. Let them not then boast so much of *manna.* 2. The all-sufficiency of the true *manna,* of which the other was a type: *This is the bread that cometh down from heaven,* that truly divine and heavenly food, *that a man may eat thereof and not die;* that is, not fall under the wrath of God, which is killing to the soul; *not die* the second death; no, nor the first death finally and irre-

coverably. *Not die*, that is, not perish, not come short of the heavenly Canaan, as the Israelites did of the earthly, for want of *faith*, though they had *manna*. This is further explained by that promise in the next words: *If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever*, *v.* 51. This is the meaning of this *never dying*: though he go down *to death*, he shall pass through it to that world where there shall be *no more death*. To *live for ever* is not to *be* for ever (the damned in hell shall *be* for ever, the soul of man was made for an endless state), but to be *happy* for ever. And because the body must needs die, and be as water spilt upon the ground, Christ here undertakes for the gathering of that up too (as before, *v.* 44, *I will raise him up at the last day*); and even that shall live for ever.

(3.) He shows what encouragements we have to believe in Christ. Christ here speaks of some who *had seen him and yet believed not*, *v.* 36. They saw his person and miracles, and heard him preach, and yet were not wrought upon to believe in him. Faith is not always the effect of sight; the soldiers were eye-witnesses of his resurrection, and yet, instead of *believing* in him, they *belied* him; so that it is a difficult thing to bring people to believe in Christ: and, by the operation of the Spirit of grace, those that *have not seen have yet believed*. Two things we are here assured of, to encourage our faith:—

[1.] That the Son will bid all those welcome that come to him (*v.* 37): *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* How welcome should this word be to our souls which bids us welcome to Christ! *Him* that cometh; it is in the singular number, denoting favour, not only to the body of believers in general, but to every particular soul that applies itself to Christ. Here, *First*, The duty required is a pure gospel duty: to *come to Christ*, that we may come to God by him. His beauty and love, those great attractives, must *draw* us to him; sense of need and fear of danger must *drive* us to him; any thing to bring us to Christ. *Secondly*, The promise is a pure gospel promise: *I will in no wise cast out*—οὐ μὴ ἐκβαγῶ ἔξω. There are two negatives: *I will not, no, I will not.* 1 Much favour is expressed here. We have reason to fear that he should *cast us out*. Considering our meanness, our vileness, our unworthiness to come, our weakness in coming, we may justly expect that he should frown upon us, and shut his doors against us; but he obviates these fears with this assurance, he *will not* do it; will not disdain us though we are mean, will not reject us though we are sinful. Do poor scholars come to him to be taught? Though they be dull and slow, he will not *cast them out*. Do poor *patients* come to him to be *cured*, poor *clients* come to him to be *advised?* Though their case be bad, and though they come empty-handed, he will *in no wise cast them out*. But, 2. More favour is implied than is expressed; whet it is said that he will not cast them out the meaning is, He will receive them, and entertain them, and give them all that which they come to him for. As he will not refuse them at their first coming, so he will not afterwards, upon every displeasure, cast them out. *His gifts and callings are without repentance.*

[2.] That the Father will, without fail, bring all those to him in due time that were given him. In the federal transactions between the Father and the Son, relating to man's redemption, as the Son undertook for the justification, sanctification, and salvation, of all that should come to him ("Let me have them put into my hands, and then leave the management of them to me"), so the Father, the fountain and original of being, life, and grace, undertook to put into his hand all that were given him, and bring them to him. Now,

First, He here *assures* us *that* this shall be done: *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me*, *v.* 37. Christ had complained (*v.* 36) of those who, though they had *seen* him, yet would not believe on him; and then he adds this,

a. For *their* conviction and awakening, plainly intimating that their not coming to him, and believing on him, if they persisted in it, would be a certain sign that they did not belong to the election of grace; for how can we think that God gave us to Christ if we give ourselves to the world and the flesh? 2 Peter i. 10.

b. For *his own* comfort and encouragement: *Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious.* The election *has obtained*, and shall though multitudes be *blinded*, Rom. xi. 7. Though he lose many of his *creatures*, yet none of his *charge*: *All that the Father gives him shall come to him* notwithstanding. Here we have, (*a.*) The election described: *All that the father giveth me*, πᾶν ὃ δίδωσι—*every thing* which the Father *giveth to me;* the persons of the elect, and all that belongs to them; all their services, all their interests. As all that he has is *theirs*, so all that they have is *his*, and he speaks of them as his all: they were given him in full recompense of his undertaking. Not only all persons, but all things, are gathered together in Christ (Eph. i. 10) and reconciled, Col. i. 20. The giving of the chosen remnant to Christ is spoken of (*v.* 39) as a thing *done;* he *hath given* them. Here it is spoken of as a thing *in the doing;* he *giveth them;* because, *when the first begotten was brought into the world*, it should seem, there was a renewal of the grant; see Heb. x. 5, &c. God was now about to *give him the heathen for his inheritance* (Ps. ii. 8), to put him in possession of *the desolate heritages* (Isa. xlix. 8), to *divide him a portion with the great*, Isa. liii. 12. And though the Jews, who *saw* him, *believed not* on him, yet these (saith he) shall *come to me;* the other sheep, which are not of this fold, shall be *brought*, *ch.* x. 15, 16. See Acts xiii. 45—48. (*b.*) The effect of it secured: *They shall*

come to me. This is not in the nature of a *promise*, but a *prediction*, that as many as were in the counsel of God ordained to life shall be brought to life by being brought to Christ. They are *scattered*, are mingled among the nations, yet none of them shall be forgotten; not a grain of God's corn shall be lost, as is promised, Amos ix. 9. They are by nature *alienated* from Christ, and averse to him, and yet *they shall come.* As God's omniscience is engaged for the finding of them all out, so is his omnipotence for the bringing of them all in. Not, They shall be *driven* to me, but, They shall come freely, shall be made *willing.*

Secondly, He here *acquaints* us *how* it shall be done. How shall those who are given to Christ be brought to him? Two things are to be done in order to it:—

a. Their *understandings* shall be *enlightened;* this is promised, *v.* 45, 46. It is written in the prophets, who spoke of these things before, *And they shall be all taught of God;* this we find, Isa. liv. 13, and Jer. xxxi. 34. *They shall all know me.* Note,

(*a.*) In order to our *believing in Jesus Christ*, it is necessary that we be *taught of God;* that is, [*a.*] That there be a *divine revelation made to us*, discovering to us both what we are to believe concerning Christ and why we are to believe it. There are some things which *even nature teaches*, but to bring us to Christ there is need of a higher light. [*b.*] That there be a *divine work wrought in us*, enabling us to understand and receive these revealed truths and the evidence of them. God, in giving us reason, teaches us more than the *beasts of the earth;* but in giving us faith he teaches more than the *natural man.* Thus all the church's children, all that are *genuine*, are *taught of God;* he hath undertaken their education.

(*b.*) It follows then, by way of inference from this, that *every man* that has *heard and learned of the Father comes to Christ, v.* 45. [*a.*] It is here implied that none will come to Christ but those that have *heard* and *learned of the Father.* We shall never be brought to Christ but under a divine conduct; except God by his grace enlighten our minds, inform our judgments, and rectify our mistakes, and not only *tell* us, that we may *hear*, but teach us, that we may *learn* the truth as it is in Jesus, we shall never be brought to believe in Christ. [*b.*] That this *divine teaching* does so necessarily produce the *faith of God's elect* that we may conclude that those who do not *come to Christ* have never *heard* nor *learned* of the Father; for, if they had, doubtless they would have come to Christ. In vain do men pretend to be *taught of God* if they believe not in Christ, for he teaches no other lesson, Gal. i. 8, 9. See how God deals with men as reasonable creatures, draws them with the *cords of a man*, opens the understanding first, and then by that, in a regular way, influences the inferior faculties; thus he comes in by the door, but Satan, as a robber, climbs up another way. But lest any should dream of a visible appearance of God the Father to the children of men (to teach them these things), and entertain any gross conceptions about hearing and learning of the Father, he adds (*v.* 46) *Not that any man hath seen the Father;* it is implied, nor *can* see him, with bodily eyes, or may expect to learn of him as Moses did, to whom he spoke *face to face;* but God, in enlightening men's eyes and teaching them, works in a spiritual way. The Father of spirits hath access to, and influence upon, men's spirits, undiscerned. Those that have not seen his face have felt his power. And yet there is one intimately acquainted with the Father, he *who is of God*, Christ himself, he hath *seen the Father, ch.* i. 18. Note, *First*, Jesus Christ is of God in a peculiar manner, God of God, light of light; not only sent of God, but begotten of God before all worlds. *Secondly*, It is the prerogative of Christ to have *seen the Father*, perfectly to know him and his counsels. *Thirdly*, Even that illumination which is preparative to faith is conveyed to us through Christ. Those that *learn of the Father*, forasmuch as they cannot see him themselves, must learn of Christ, who alone hath seen him. As all divine discoveries are made through Christ, so through him all divine powers are exerted.

b. Their *wills* shall be *bowed.* If the soul of man had now its original rectitude there needed no more to influence the will than the illumination of the understanding; but in the depraved soul of fallen man there is a rebellion of the will against the right dictates of the understanding; a *carnal mind*, which is *enmity* itself to the divine light and law. It is therefore requisite that there be a work of grace wrought upon the will, which is here called *drawing* (*v.* 44): *No man can come to me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him.* The Jews murmured at the doctrine of Christ; not only would not receive it themselves, but were angry that others did. Christ overheard their secret whisperings, and said (*v.* 43), "*Murmur not among yourselves;* lay not the fault of your dislike of my doctrine one upon another, as if it were because you find it generally distasted; no, it is owing to yourselves, and your own corrupt dispositions, which are such as amount to a *moral impotency;* your antipathies to the truths of God, and prejudices against them, are so strong that nothing less than a divine power can conquer them." And this is the case of all mankind: "*No man can come to me*, can persuade himself to come up to the terms of the gospel, *except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him,*" *v.* 44. Observe, (*a.*) The nature of the work: It is *drawing*, which denotes not a *force* put upon the will, but a *change* wrought in the will, whereby of unwilling we are made willing, and a new bias is given to the soul, by which it inclines to God. This

seems to be more than a *moral suasion*, for by that it is in the power of man to *draw;* yet it is not to be called a *physical impulse*, for it lies out of the road of *nature;* but he that *formed the spirit of man within him* by his creating power, and *fashions the hearts of men* by his providential influence, knows how to new-mould the soul, and to alter its bent and temper, and make it conformable to himself and his own will, without doing any wrong to its natural liberty. It is such a drawing as works not only a *compliance*, but a cheerful compliance, a complacency: *Draw us, and we will run after thee.* (*b.*) The necessity of it: *No man*, in this weak and helpless state, can come to Christ without it. As we *cannot* do any natural action without the concurrence of *common providence*, so we cannot do any action morally good without the influence of *special grace*, in which the *new man* lives, and moves, and has its being, as much as the *mere man* has in the divine providence. (*c.*) The author of it: The *Father who hath sent me.* The Father, having sent Christ, will succeed him, for he would not send him on a fruitless errand. Christ having undertaken to bring souls to glory, God promised him, in order thereunto, to bring them to him, and so to give him possession of those to whom he had given him a right. God, having by promise given the kingdom of Israel to David, did at length *draw the hearts* of the people to him; so, having sent Christ to save souls, he sends souls to him to be saved by him. (*d.*) The crown and perfection of this work: And *I will raise him up at the last day.* This is four times mentioned in this discourse, and doubtless it includes all the intermediate and preparatory workings of divine grace. When he *raises them up at the last day*, he will put the *last hand* to his undertaking, will *bring forth the topstone.* If he undertakes this, surely he *can* do any thing, and will do every thing that is necessary in order to it. Let our expectations be carried out towards a happiness reserved for the *last day*, when all the years of time shall be fully complete and ended.

4. Christ, having thus spoken of himself as the *bread of life*, and of faith as *the work of God*, comes more particularly to show *what of himself* is this bread, namely, his flesh, and that to believe is to eat of that, *v.* 51—58, where he still prosecutes the metaphor of food. Observe, here, the *preparation* of this food: *The bread that I will give is my flesh* (*v.* 51), *the flesh of the Son of man and his blood, v.* 53. *His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, v.* 55. Observe, also, the *participation* of this food: We must *eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood* (*v.* 53); and again (*v.* 54), *Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood;* and the same words (*v.* 56, 57), he that *eateth me.* This is certainly a parable or figurative discourse, wherein the actings of the soul upon things spiritual and divine are represented by bodily actions about things sensible, which made the truths of Christ more intelligible to some, and less so to others, Mark iv. 11—12. Now,

(1.) Let us see how this discourse of Christ was liable to mistake and misconstruction, that *men might see, and not perceive.* [1.] It was misconstrued by the carnal *Jews*, to whom it was first delivered (*v.* 52): *They strove among themselves;* they whispered in each other's ears their dissatisfaction: *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* Christ spoke (*v.* 51) of giving his flesh *for us*, to suffer and die; but they, without due consideration, understood it of his giving it *to us*, to be eaten, which gave occasion to Christ to tell them that, however what he said was otherwise intended, yet even that also of *eating of his flesh* was no such absurd thing (if rightly understood) as *prima facie—in the first instance*, they took it to be. [2.] It has been wretchedly misconstrued by the church of Rome for the support of their monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, which gives the lie to our senses, contradicts the nature of a sacrament, and overthrows all convincing evidence. They, like these Jews here, understand it of a corporal and carnal eating of Christ's body, like Nicodemus, *ch.* 3, 4. The Lord's supper was not yet instituted, and therefore it could have no reference to that; it is a *spiritual* eating and drinking that is here spoken of, not a *sacramental.* [3.] It is misunderstood by many ignorant carnal people, who hence infer that, if they take the sacrament when they die, they shall certainly go to heaven, which, as it makes many that are weak causelessly uneasy if they want it, so it makes many that are wicked causelessly easy if they have it. Therefore,

(2.) Let us see how this discourse of Christ to be understood.

[1.] What is meant by the *flesh and blood of Christ.* It is called (*v.* 53), *The flesh of the Son of man, and his blood, his* as Messiah and Mediator: the *flesh and blood* which he *assumed* in his incarnation (Heb. ii. 14), and which he *gave up* in his *death* and *suffering: my flesh which I will give* to be crucified and slain. It is said to be *given for the life of the world*, that is, *First, Instead* of the *life of the world*, which was *forfeited* by sin, Christ gives his own flesh as a ransom or counterprice. Christ was our bail, bound *body for body* (as we say), and therefore *his* life must go for *ours*, that ours may be spared. *Here am I, let these go their way. Secondly, In order to* the *life of the world*, to purchase a *general* offer of eternal life to all the world, and the *special* assurances of it to all believers. So that the *flesh and blood* of the Son of man denote the Redeemer *incarnate* and *dying;* Christ and *him crucified*, and the redemption wrought out by him, with all the precious benefits of redemption: pardon of sin, acceptance with God, the adoption of sons,

access to the throne of grace, the promises of the covenant, and eternal life; these are called *the flesh and blood* of Christ, 1. Because they are purchased by his flesh and blood, by the breaking of his body, and the shedding of his blood. Well may the purchased privileges be denominated from the price that was paid for them, for it puts a value upon them; write upon them *pretium sanguinis—the price of blood.* 2. Because they are meat and drink to our souls. *Flesh with the blood* was prohibited (Gen. ix. 4), but the privileges of the gospel are as flesh and blood to us, prepared for the nourishment of our souls. He had before compared himself to *bread,* which is necessary food; here to *flesh,* which is delicious. It is a *feast of fat things,* Isa. xxv. 6. The soul is satisfied with Christ as *with marrow and fatness,* Ps. lxiii. 5. It is *meat indeed,* and *drink indeed; truly so,* that is spiritually; so Dr. Whitby; as Christ is called the *true vine;* or *truly meat,* in opposition to the shows and shadows with which the world shams off those that feed upon it. In Christ and his gospel there is real supply, solid satisfaction; that is *meat indeed,* and *drink indeed,* which satiates and replenishes, Jer. xxxi. 25, 26.

[2.] What is meant by *eating this flesh* and *drinking* this *blood,* which is so necessary and beneficial; it is certain that it means neither more nor less than believing in Christ. As we partake of meat and drink by eating and drinking, so we partake of Christ and his benefits by faith: and *believing in Christ* includes these four things, which *eating and drinking* do:—*First,* It implies an *appetite* to Christ. This spiritual eating and drinking begins with *hungering* and *thirsting* (Matt. v. 6), earnest and importunate desires after Christ, not willing to take up with any thing short of an interest in him: "Give me Christ or else I die." *Secondly,* An *application* of Christ to ourselves. Meat *looked upon* will not nourish us, but meat *fed upon,* and so made *our own,* and as it were *one with us.* We must so accept of Christ as to appropriate him to ourselves: *my Lord, and my God, ch.* xx. 28. *Thirdly,* A *delight* in Christ and his salvation. The doctrine of Christ crucified must be *meat and drink* to us, most pleasant and delightful. We must feast upon the dainties of the *New Testament in the blood of Christ,* taking as great a complacency in the methods which Infinite Wisdom has taken to redeem and save us as ever we did in the most needful supplies or grateful delights of nature. *Fourthly,* A *derivation of nourishment* from him and a dependence upon him for the support and comfort of our spiritual life, and the strength, growth, and vigour of the new man. To *feed upon Christ* is to do all *in his name,* in union with him, and by virtue drawn from him; it is to live upon him as we do upon our meat. How our bodies are nourished by our food we cannot describe, but that they are so we know and find; so it is with this spiritual nourishment. Our Saviour was so well pleased with this metaphor (as very significant and expressive) that, when afterwards he would institute some outward sensible signs, by which to represent our *communicating* of the benefits of his death, he chose those of *eating* and *drinking,* and made them *sacramental* actions.

(3.) Having thus explained the general meaning of this part of Christ's discourse, the particulars are reducible to two heads:—

[1.] The *necessity* of our *feeding upon Christ* (*v.* 53): *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you.* That is, *First,* "It is a certain sign that you *have no* spiritual *life* in you if you have no *desire* towards Christ, nor *delight* in him." If the soul does not *hunger* and *thirst,* certainly it does not *live:* it is a sign that we are dead indeed if we are dead to such meat and drink as this. When *artificial* bees, that by curious springs were made to move to and fro, were to be *distinguished* from *natural* ones (they say), it was done by putting honey among them, which the natural bees only flocked to, but the artificial ones minded not, for *they had no life in them. Secondly,* "It is certain that you *can have* no spiritual life, unless you derive it from Christ by faith; separated from him you can do nothing. Faith in Christ is the *primum vivens—the first living principle* of grace; without i we have not the *truth* of *spiritual* life, nor any title to eternal life: our bodies may as well live without meat as our souls without Christ.

[2.] The *benefit* and *advantage* of it, in two things:—

First, We shall be *one with Christ,* as our bodies are with our food when it is digested (*v.* 56): *He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood,* that lives by faith in Christ crucified (it is spoken of as a continued act), he *dwelleth in me, and I in him.* By faith we have a close and intimate union with Christ; he is *in us,* and we *in him, ch.* xvii. 21—23; 1 John iii. 24. Believers dwell in Christ as their stronghold or city of refuge; Christ dwells in them as the master of the house, to rule it and provide for it. Such is the union between Christ and believers that he shares in their griefs, and they share in his graces and joys; he *sups* with them upon their bitter herbs, and *they with him* upon his *rich dainties.* It is an inseparable union, like that between the body and digested food, Rom. viii. 35; 1 John iv. 13.

Secondly, We shall *live,* shall live eternally, *by him,* as our bodies live by our food.

a. We shall *live by him* (*v.* 57): *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* We have here the series and order of the divine life. (*a.*) God is the *living Father,* hath life in and of himself. *I am that I am* is his name for ever. (*b.*) Jesus Christ, as Mediator, lives *by the Father;* he has life *in*

himself (*ch.* v. 26), but he has it of the Father. He that sent him, not only qualified him with that life which was necessary to so great an undertaking, but constituted him the treasury of divine life to us; he breathed into the second Adam the breath of spiritual lives, as into the first Adam the breath of natural lives. (*c.*) True believers receive this divine life by virtue of their union with Christ, which is inferred from the union between the Father and the Son, as it is compared to it, *ch.* xvii. 21. For therefore *he that eateth me*, or feeds on me, *even he shall live by me:* those that live *upon* Christ shall live *by* him. The life of believers is *had from Christ* (*ch.* i. 16); it is *hid with Christ* (Col. iii. 4), we live by *him* as the members by the head, the branches by the root; because he lives, we shall live also.

b. We shall live *eternally* by him (*v.* 54): *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,* as prepared in the gospel to be the food of souls, he *hath eternal life*, he hath it now, as *v.* 40. He has that in him which is eternal life begun; he has the earnest and foretaste of it, and the hope of it; he shall live *for ever*, *v.* 58. His happiness shall run parallel with the longest line of eternity itself.

Lastly, The historian concludes with an account *where* Christ had this discourse with the Jews (*v.* 59): *In the synagogue as he taught*, implying that he taught them many other things besides these, but this was that in his discourse which was new. He adds this, that he said these things *in the synagogue*, to show, 1. The credit of Christ's doctrine. His truths sought no corners, but were publicly preached in mixed assemblies, as able to abide the most severe and impartial test. Christ pleaded this upon his trial (*ch.* xviii. 20): *I ever taught in the synagogue.* 2. The credibility of this narrative of it. To assure you that the discourse was fairly represented, he appeals to the synagogue at Capernaum, where it might be examined.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life. 64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. 70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71 He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

We have here an account of the effects of Christ's discourse. Some were offended and others edified by it; some driven *from him* and others brought nearer *to him.*

I To some it was a *savour of death unto death;* not only to the Jews, who were professed enemies to him and his doctrine, but even to many of *his disciples*, such as were disciples *at large*, who were his frequent hearers, and followed him *in public;* a mixed multitude, like those among Israel, that began all the discontents. Now here we have,

1. Their murmurings at the doctrine they heard (*v.* 60); not a few, but many of them, were offended at it. Of the several sorts of ground that received the seed, only one in four brought forth fruit. See what they say to it (*v.* 60): *This is a hard saying, who can hear it?* (1.) They do not like it themselves: "What stuff is this? *Eat the flesh, and drink the blood, of the Son of man!* If it is to be understood figuratively, it is not intelligible; if literally, not practicable. What! must we turn cannibals? Can we not be religious, but we must be barbarous?" *Si Christiani adorant quod comedunt* (said Averroes), *sit anima mea cum philosophis — If Christians adore what they eat, my mind shall continue with the philosophers.* Now, when they found it a hard saying, if they had humbly begged of Christ to have *declared unto them this parable*, he would have opened it, and their understandings too; for *the meek will he teach his way.* But they were not willing to have Christ's sayings explained to them, because they would not lose *this* pretence for rejecting them—that they were *hard sayings.* (2.) They think it impossible that any one else should like it: "*Who can hear it?* Surely none can." Thus the scoffers at religion are ready to undertake that all the intelligent part of mankind concur with them. They conclude with great assurance that no *man of sense* will admit the doctrine of Christ, nor any *man of spirit* submit to his laws. Because they cannot bear

to be so *tutored*, so *tied up*, themselves, they think none else can: *Who can hear it?* Thanks be to God, thousands have *heard* these sayings of Christ, and have found them not only easy, but pleasant, as their *necessary food.*

2. Christ's animadversions upon their murmurings.

(1.) He well enough knew their murmurings, *v.* 61. Their cavils were secret in their own breasts, or whispered among themselves in a corner. But, [1.] Christ *knew* them; he saw them, he heard them. Note, Christ takes notice not only of the bold and open *defiances* that are done to his name and glory by *daring sinners*, but of the secret slights that are put upon his doctrine by carnal professors; he knows that which the *fool saith in his heart*, and cannot for shame *speak out;* he observes how his doctrine is *resented* by those to whom it is *preached*; who *rejoice* in it, and who *murmur* at it; who are reconciled to it, and bow before it, and who quarrel with it, and rebel against it, though ever so secretly. [2.] He knew it *in himself*, not by any information given him, nor any external indication of the thing, but by his own divine omniscience. He knew it not as the prophets, by a *divine revelation* made to him (that which the prophets desired to know was sometimes hid from them, as 2 Kings iv. 27), but by a *divine knowledge* in him. He is that essential Word that *discerns the thoughts of the heart*, Heb. iv. 12, 13. Thoughts are words to Christ; we should therefore take heed not only what we say and do, but what we think.

(2.) He well enough knew how to answer them: "*Doth this offend you?* Is this a stumbling-block to you?" See how people by their own wilful mistakes create offences to themselves: they take offence where there is none given, and even make it where there is nothing to make it of. Note, We may justly wonder that so much offence should be taken at the doctrine of Christ for so little cause. Christ speaks of it here with wonder: "*Doth this offend you?* How unreasonable are your quarrels!" Now, in answer to those who condemned his doctrine as intricate and obscure (*Si non vis intelligi, debes negligi—If you are unwilling to be understood, you ought to be neglected*),

[1.] He gives them a hint of his ascension into heaven, as that which would give an irresistible evidence of the truth of his doctrine (*v.* 62): *What and if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?* And what then? *First*, "If I should tell you of that, surely it would much more offend you, and you would think my pretensions too high indeed. If this be so hard a saying that you cannot hear it, how will you digest it when I tell you of my returning *to* heaven, whence I came down?" See *ch.* iii. 12. Those who stumble at smaller difficulties should consider how they will get over greater. *Secondly*, "When you see the Son of man ascend, this will much more offend you, for then my body will be less capable of being eaten by you in that gross sense wherein you now understand it;" so Dr. Whitby. Or, *Thirdly*, "When you see that, or hear it from those that shall see it, surely then you will be satisfied. You think I take too much upon me when I say, *I came down from heaven*, for it was with this that you quarrelled (*v.* 42); but will you think so when you see me return to heaven?" If he *ascended*, certainly he *descended*, Eph. iv. 9, 10. Christ did often refer himself thus to *subsequent* proofs, as *ch.* i. 50, 51; ii. 14; Matt. xii. 40; xxvi. 64. Let us wait awhile, till the mystery of God shall be finished, and then we shall see that there was no reason to be offended at any of Christ's sayings.

[2.] He gives them a general key to this and all such parabolical discourses, teaching them that they are to be understood spiritually, and not after a corporal and carnal manner: *It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, v.* 63. As it is in the natural body, the animal spirits quicken and enliven it, and without these the most nourishing food would profit nothing (what would the body be the better for bread, if it were not quickened and animated by the spirit), so it is with the soul. *First*, The bare participation of ordinances, unless the Spirit of God work with them, and quicken the soul by them, *profits nothing;* the word and ordinances, if the Spirit works with them, are as food to a living man, if not, they are as food to a dead man. Even the flesh of Christ, the sacrifice for sin, will avail us nothing unless the blessed Spirit quicken our souls thereby, and enforce the powerful influences of his death upon us, till we by his grace are planted together in the likeness of it. *Secondly*, The doctrine of eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood, if it be understood literally, *profits nothing*, but rather leads us into mistakes and prejudices; but the spiritual sense or meaning of it quickens the soul, makes it *alive* and *lively;* for so it follows: *The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. To eat the flesh of Christ!* this is a hard saying, but to believe that Christ died for me, to derive from that doctrine strength and comfort in my approaches to God, my oppositions to sin and preparations for a future state, this is the *spirit and life* of that saying, and, construing it thus, it is an excellent saying. The reason why men *dislike* Christ's sayings is because they *mistake* them. The literal sense of a parable does us no good, we are never the wiser for it, but the spiritual meaning is instructive. *Thirdly, The flesh profits nothing*—those that *are in the flesh* (so some understand it), that are under the power of a carnal mind, *profit not* by Christ's discourses; but *the Spirit quickeneth*—those that have the Spirit, that are spiritual, are quickened and enli-

vened by them; for they are received *ad modum recipientis—so as to correspond with the state of the receiver's mind.* They found fault with Christ's sayings, whereas the fault was in themselves; it is only to *sensual* minds that spiritual things are *senseless* and *sapless*, spiritual minds *relish* them; see 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15.

[3.] He gives them an intimation of his *knowledge of them*, and that he had expected no better from them, though they called themselves his disciples, *v.* 64, 65. Now was fulfilled that of the prophet, speaking of Christ and his doctrine (Isa. liii. 1), *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Both these Christ here takes notice of.

First, They did not *believe his report*: "There are *some of you* who said you would leave all to follow me who yet *believe not*;" and this was the reason why the *word preached did not profit them*, because it was *not mixed with faith*, Heb. iv. 2. They did not believe him to be the Messiah, else they would have acquiesced in the doctrine he preached, and not have quarrelled with it, though there were some things in it *dark, and hard to be understood. Oportet discentum credere — Young beginners in learning must take things upon their teacher's word.* Note, 1. Among those who are *nominal Christians*, there are many who are *real infidels.* 2. The unbelief of hypocrites, before it discovers itself to the world, is naked and open before the eyes of Christ. He *knew from the beginning* who they were of the multitudes that followed him that *believed*, and who of the twelve should betray him; he knew *from the beginning* of their acquaintance with him, and attendance on him, when they were in the hottest pang of their zeal, who were sincere, as Nathanael (*ch.* i. 47), and who were not. Before they distinguished themselves by an overt act, he could infallibly distinguish *who believed* and who did not, whose love was *counterfeit* and whose *cordial.* We may gather hence, (1.) That the apostasy of those who have long made a plausible profession of religion is a certain proof of their constant hypocrisy, and that *from the beginning they believed not*, but is not a proof of the possibility of the total and final apostasy of any true believers: such revolts are not to be called the fall of real saints, but the discovery of pretended ones; see 1 John ii. 19. *Stella cadens non stella fuit—The star that falls never was a star.* (2.) That it is Christ's prerogative to *know the heart*; he knows who they are that *believe not*, but dissemble in their profession, and yet continues them room in his church, the use of his ordinances, and the credit of his name, and does not discover them in this world, unless they by their own wickedness discover themselves; because such is the constitution of his visible church, and the discovering day is yet to come. But, if we pretend to judge men's hearts, we step into Christ's throne, and anticipate his judgment. We are often deceived in men, and see cause to change our sentiments of them; but this we are sure of, that Christ knows all men, and *his judgment is according to truth.*

Secondly, The reason why they did not believe his report was because the *arm of the Lord* was not *revealed* to them (*v.* 65): *Therefore said I unto you that no man can come to me, except it be given unto him of my Father*; referring to *v.* 44. Christ therefore could not but know who believed and who did not, because faith is the gift and work of God, and all his Father's gifts and works could not but be known to him, for they all passed through his hands. There he had said that none could *come to him, except the Father draw him*; here he saith, *except it be given him of my Father*, which shows that God *draws* souls by giving them grace and strength, and a heart to come, without which, such is the moral impotency of man, in his fallen state, that he *cannot come.*

3. We have here their final apostasy from Christ hereupon: *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him, v.* 66. When we admit into our minds hard thoughts of the word and works of Christ, and conceive a secret dislike, and are willing to hear insinuations tending to their reproach, we are then *entering into temptation*; it is as the letting forth of water; it is *looking back*, which, if infinite mercy prevent not, will end in *drawing back*; therefore *Obsta principiis—Take heed of the beginnings* of apostasy. (1.) See here the *backsliding* of these *disciples. Many of them went back* to their houses, and families, and callings, which they had left for a time to follow him; *went back*, one to his farm and another to his merchandise; *went back*, as Orpah did, to their people, and to their gods, Ruth i. 15. They had entered themselves in Christ's school, but they *went back*, did not only play truant for once, but took leave of him and his doctrine for ever. Note, The apostasy of Christ's disciples from him, though really a strange thing, yet has been such a common thing that we need not be surprised at it. Here were *many* that *went back.* It is often so; when some backslide many backslide with them; the disease is infectious. (2.) The occasion of this backsliding: *From that time*, from the time that Christ preached this comfortable doctrine, that he is the *bread of life*, and that those who by faith feed *upon him* shall live *by him* (which, one would think, should have engaged them to cleave more closely to him)—from *that* time they withdrew. Note, The corrupt and wicked heart of man often makes that an occasion of offence which is indeed matter of the greatest comfort. Christ foresaw that they would thus take offence at what he said, and yet he said it. That which is the undoubted word and truth of Christ must be faithfully delivered, whoever may be offended at it. Men's humours must be captivated to God's word, and not God's word accommodated to men's

humours. (3.) The degree of their apostasy: *They walked no more with him,* returned no more to him and attended no more upon his ministry. It is hard for those who have been *once enlightened,* and have *tasted the good word of God, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance,* Heb. vi. 4—6.

II. This discourse was to others a *savour of life unto life. Many went back,* but, thanks be to God, all did not; even then the *twelve* stuck to him. Though the *faith of some be overthrown,* yet the *foundation of God stands sure.* Observe here,

1. The affectionate question which Christ put to the twelve (*v.* 67): *Will you also go away?* He saith nothing to those who went back. *If the unbelieving depart, let them depart;* it was no great *loss* of those whom he never *had;* lightly come, lightly go; but he takes this occasion to speak to the twelve, to confirm them, and by trying their stedfastness the more to fix them: *Will you also go away?* (1.) "It is *at your choice* whether you will or no; if you will forsake me, now is the time, when so many do: it is an hour of temptation; if you will go back, go now." Note, Christ will detain none with him against their wills; his soldiers are volunteers, not pressed men. The twelve had now had time enough to try how they liked Christ and his doctrine, and that none of them might afterwards say that they were trepanned into discipleship, and if it were to do again they would not do it, he here allows them a power of revocation, and leaves them at their liberty; as Josh. xxiv. 15; Ruth i. 15. (2.) "It is *at your peril* if you do go away." If there was any secret inclination in the heart of any of them to depart from him, he stops it with this awakening question, "*Will you also go away?* Think not that you hang at as loose an end as they did, and may go away as easily as they could. They have not been so intimate with me as you have been, nor received so many favours from me; they are gone, but will *you* also go? Remember your character, and say, Whatever others do, we will never go away. *Should such a man as I flee?*" Neh. vi. 11. Note, The nearer we have been to Christ and the longer we have been with him, the more mercies we have received from him and the more engagements we have laid ourselves under to him, the greater will be our sin if we desert him. (3.) "I have reason *to think you will not.* Will you go away? No, I have faster hold of you than so; *I hope better things of you* (Heb. vi. 9), for *you are they that have continued with me,*" Luke xxii. 28. When the apostasy of some is a grief to the Lord Jesus, the constancy of others is so much the more his honour, and he is pleased with it accordingly. Christ and believers know one another too well to part upon every displeasure.

2. The believing reply which Peter, in the name of the rest, made to this question, *v.* 68, 69. Christ put the question to them, as Joshua put Israel to their choice whom they would serve, with design to draw out from them a promise to adhere to him, and it had the like effect. *Nay, but we will serve the Lord.* Peter was upon all occasions the *mouth of the rest,* not so much because he had more of his Master's ear than they, but because he had more tongue of his own; and what he said was sometimes approved and sometimes reprimanded (Matt. xvi. 17, 23) —the common lot of those who are swift to speak. This here was well said, admirably well; and probably he said it by the direction, and with the express assent, of his fellow-disciples; at least he knew their mind, and spoke the sense of them all, and did not except Judas, for we must hope the best.

(1.) Here is a good resolution to adhere to Christ, and so expressed as to intimate that they would not entertain the least thought of leaving him: "*Lord, to whom shall we go?* It were folly to go from thee, unless we knew where to better ourselves; no, Lord, we like our choice too well to change." Note, Those who leave Christ would do well to consider to whom they will go, and whether they can expect to find rest and peace any where but in him. See Ps. lxxiii. 27, 28; Hos. ii. 9. "*Whither shall we go?* Shall we make our court to the world? It will certainly *deceive* us. Shall we return to sin? It will certainly *destroy* us. Shall we leave the *fountain of living waters* for *broken cisterns?*" The disciples resolve to continue their pursuit of life and happiness, and will have a guide to it, and will adhere to Christ as their guide, for they can never have a better. "Shall we go to the heathen philosophers, and become their disciples? They are become vain in their imaginations, and, professing themselves to be wise in other things, are become fools in religion. Shall we go to the scribes and Pharisees, and sit at their feet? What good can they do us who have made void the commandments of God by their traditions? Shall we go to Moses? He will send us back again to thee. Therefore, if ever we find the way to happiness, it must be in following thee." Note, Christ's holy religion appears to great advantage when it is compared with other institutions, for then it will be seen how far it excels them all. Let those who find fault with this religion find a better before they quit it. A divine teacher we must have; can we find a better than Christ? A divine revelation we cannot be without; if the scripture be not such a one, where else may we look for it?

(2.) Here is a good reason for this resolution. It was not the inconsiderate resolve of a blind affection, but the result of mature deliberation. The disciples were resolved never to go away from Christ,

[1.] Because of the *advantage* they promised themselves by him: *Thou hast the words of eternal life.* They themselves did not fully understand Christ's discourse, for as yet the doctrine of the cross was a riddle

to them; but in the general they were satisfied that *he had the words of eternal life*, that is, *First*, That the word of his doctrine showed the way to *eternal life*, set it before us, and directed us what to do, that we might inherit it. *Secondly*, That the word of his *determination* must confer eternal life. His *having the words of eternal life* is the same with his having *power to give eternal life to as many as were given him, ch.* xvii. 2. He had in the foregoing discourse assured *eternal life* to his followers; these disciples fastened upon this plain saying, and therefore resolved to stick to him, when the others overlooked this, and fastened upon the *hard sayings*, and therefore forsook him. Though we cannot account for every mystery, every obscurity, in Christ's doctrine, yet we know, in the general, that it is the word of eternal life, and therefore must live and die by it; for if we forsake Christ *we forsake our own mercies.*

[2.] Because of the assurance they had concerning him (*v.* 69): *We believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ.* If he be the promised Messiah, he must *bring in an everlasting righteousness* (Dan. ix. 24), and therefore has the *words of eternal life*, for *righteousness reigns to eternal life*, Rom. v. 21. Observe, *First*, The *doctrine* they believed: that this Jesus was the Messiah promised to the fathers and expected by them, and that he was not a mere man, but the Son of the living God, the same to whom God had said, *Thou art my Son*, Ps. ii. 7. In times of temptation to apostasy it is good to have recourse to our first principles, and stick to them; and, if we faithfully abide by that which is *past dispute*, we shall be the better able both to *find* and to *keep* the truth in matters of doubtful disputation. *Secondly*, The *degree* of their faith it rose up to a full assurance: *We are sure.* We have known it *by experience;* this is the best knowledge. We should take occasion from others' wavering to be so much the more established, especially in that which is the present truth. When we have so strong a faith in the gospel of Christ as boldly to venture our souls *upon it*, knowing *whom we have believed*, then, and not till then, we shall be willing to venture every thing else for it.

3. The melancholy remark which our Lord Jesus made upon this reply of Peter's (*v.* 70, 71): *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?* And the evangelist tells us whom he meant: *he spoke of Judas Iscariot.* Peter had undertaken for them all that they would be faithful to their Master. Now Christ does not condemn his charity (it is always good to hope the best), but he tacitly corrects his confidence. We must not be too sure concerning any. God knows those that are his; we do not. Observe here, (1.) Hypocrites and betrayers of Christ are no better than devils. Judas not only *had* a devil, but he *was* a devil. One of you is a *false accuser;* so διάβολος sometimes signifies (2 Tim. iii. 3); and it is probable that Judas, when he sold his Master to the chief priests, represented him to them as a bad man, to justify himself in what he did. But I rather take it as we read it: *He is a devil*, a devil incarnate, a fallen apostle, as the devil a fallen angel. He is Satan, an adversary, an enemy to Christ. He is Abaddon, and Apollyon, a son of perdition. He was of his father the devil, did his lusts, was in his interests, as Cain, 1 John iii. 12. Those whose bodies were possessed by the devil are never called *devils (demoniacs*, but not *devils);* but Judas, into whose *heart* Satan entered, and filled it, is called a *devil.* (2.) Many that are *seeming* saints are *real* devils. Judas had as fair an outside as many of the apostles; his venom was, like that of the serpent, covered with a fine skin. He *cast out devils*, and appeared an enemy to the devil's kingdom, and yet was himself a devil all the while. Not only he *will be* one shortly, but he *is one* now. It is *strange*, and to be wondered at; Christ speaks of it with wonder: *Have not I?* It is *sad*, and to be lamented, that ever Christianity should be made a cloak to diabolism. (3.) The disguises of hypocrites, however they may deceive men, and put a cheat upon them, cannot deceive Christ, for his piercing eye sees through them. He can call those *devils* that call themselves *Christians*, like the prophet's greeting to Jeroboam's wife, when she came to him in masquerade (1 Kings xiv. 6): *Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam.* Christ's *divine sight*, far better than any *double sight*, can see spirits. (4.) There are those who are chosen by Christ to special services who yet prove false to him: *I have chosen you* to the *apostleship*, for it is expressly said that Judas was not chosen to eternal life (*ch.* xiii. 18), and yet one of *you* is a devil. Note, Advancement to places of honour and trust in the church is no certain evidence of saving grace. *We have prophesied in thy name.* (5.) In the most *select* societies on this side heaven it is no new thing to meet with those that are corrupt. Of the twelve that were chosen to an intimate conversation with an *incarnate Deity*, as great an honour and privilege as ever men were chosen to, one was an *incarnate devil.* The historian lays an emphasis upon this, that Judas was *one of the twelve* that were so dignified and distinguished. Let us not reject and unchurch the twelve because *one of them is a devil*, nor say that they are all cheats and hypocrites because one of them was so; let those that are so bear the blame, and not those who, while they are undiscovered, incorporate with them. There is a society within the veil into which no unclean thing shall enter, a church of first-born, in which are no *false brethren.*

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's declining for some time to appear publicly in Judea, ver. 1. II. His design to go up to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, and his discourse with his kindred in Galilee concerning his going up to this feast, ver. 2—13. III. His preaching publicly in the temple at that feast. 1. In the midst of the feast, ver. 14, 15. We have his discourse with the Jews,

(1.) Concerning his doctrine, ver. 16—18. (2.) Concerning the crime of sabbath-breaking laid to his charge, ver. 19—24. (3.) Concerning himself, both whence he came and whither he was going, ver. 25—36. 2. On the last day of the feast. (1.) His gracious invitation to poor souls to come to him, ver. 37—39. (2.) The reception that it met with. [1.] Many of the people disputed about it, ver. 40—44. [2.] The chief priests would have brought him into trouble for it, but were first disappointed by their officers (ver. 45—49) and then silenced by one of their own court, ver. 50—53.

AFTER these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. 2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. 3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. 4 For *there is* no man *that* doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world. 5 For neither did his brethren believe in him. 6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. 7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. 8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. 9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee. 10 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. 11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? 12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. 13 Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

We have here, I. The reason given why Christ spent more of his time in Galilee than in Judea (*v.* 1): *because the Jews*, the people in Judea and Jerusalem, sought to *kill him*, for curing the impotent man on the sabbath day, *ch.* v. 16. They thought to be the death of him, either by a popular tumult or by a legal prosecution, in consideration of which he kept at a distance in another part of the country, very much out of the lines of Jerusalem's communication. It is not said, He *durst not*, but, He *would not*, walk in Jewry; it was not through fear and cowardice that he declined it, but in *prudence*, because his hour was not yet come. Note, 1. Gospel light is justly *taken away* from those that endeavour to extinguish it. Christ will withdraw from those that drive him from them, will hide his face from those that spit in it, and justly shut up his bowels from those who spurn at them. 2. In times of imminent peril it is not only *allowable*, but *advisable*, to *withdraw* and *abscond* for our own safety and preservation, and to choose the service of those places which are least perilous, Matt. x. 23. *Then*, and not till *then*, we are called to expose and lay down our lives, when we cannot save them without sin. 3. If the providence of God casts persons of *merit* into places of obscurity and little note, it must not be thought strange; it was the lot of our Master himself. He who was fit to have sat in the highest of Moses's seats willingly walked in Galilee among the ordinary sort of people. Observe, He did not sit still in Galilee, nor bury himself alive there, but *walked;* he went about doing good. When we cannot do *what* and *where* we *would*, we must do *what* and *where* we *can*.

II. The approach of the *feast of tabernacles* (*v.* 2), one of the three solemnities which called for the personal attendance of all the males at Jerusalem; see the institution of it, Lev. xxiii. 34, &c., and the revival of it after a long disuse, Neh. viii. 14. It was intended to be both a *memorial* of the tabernacle state of Israel in the wilderness, and a *figure* of the tabernacle state of God's spiritual Israel in this world. This feast, which was instituted so many hundred years before, was still religiously observed. Note, Divine institutions are never antiquated, nor go out of date, by length of time: nor must wilderness mercies ever be forgotten. But it is called the *Jews' feast*, because it was now shortly to be *abolished*, as a mere Jewish thing, and left to them that *served the tabernacle*.

III. Christ's discourse with his *brethren*, some of his kindred, whether by his mother or his supposed father is not certain; but they were such as pretended to have an interest in him, and therefore interposed to advise him in his conduct. And observe,

1. Their ambition and vain-glory in urging him to make a more public appearance than he did: "*Depart hence*," said they, "*and go into Judea* (*v.* 3), where thou wilt make a better figure than thou canst here."

(1.) They give two reasons for this advice: [1.] That it would be an encouragement to those in and about Jerusalem who had a respect for him; for, expecting his temporal kingdom, the royal seat of which they concluded must be at Jerusalem, they would have had the disciples *there* particularly countenanced, and thought the time he spent among his Galilean disciples wasted and thrown away, and his miracles turning to no account unless those at Jerusalem saw them. Or, "That *thy disciples*, all of them in general, who will be gathered at Jerusalem to keep the feast, may *see thy works*, and not, as here, a few at one time and a few at another." [2.] That it

would be for the advancement of his name and honour: *There is no man that does any thing in secret* if he himself *seeks to be known* openly. They took it for granted that Christ sought to make himself known, and therefore thought it absurd for him to conceal his miracles: "*If thou do these things*, if thou be so well able to gain the applause of the people and the approbation of the rulers by thy miracles, venture abroad, and *show thyself to the world.* Supported with these credentials, thou canst not fail of acceptance, and therefore it is high time to set up for an interest, and to think of being *great.*"

(2.) One would not think there was any harm in this advice, and yet the evangelist notes it is an evidence of their infidelity: *For neither did his brethren believe in him (v.* 5), if they had, they would not have said this. Observe, [1.] It was an honour to be of the kindred of Christ, but no *saving* honour; they that hear his word and keep it are the kindred he values. Surely grace runs in no blood in the world, when not in that of Christ's family. [2.] It was a sign that Christ did not aim at any secular interest, for then his kindred would have struck in with him, and he would have secured them first. [3.] There were those who were akin to Christ according to the flesh who did believe in him (three of the twelve were *his brethren*), and yet others, as nearly allied to him as they, did not believe in him. Many that have the same external privileges and advantages do not make the same use of them. But,

(3.) What was there amiss in the advice which they gave him? I answer, [1.] It was a piece of presumption for them to prescribe to Christ, and to teach him what measures to take; it was a sign that they *did not believe him* able to guide them, when they did not think him sufficient to guide himself. [2.] They discovered a great carelessness about his safety, when they would have him go to Judea, where they knew the Jews sought to kill him. Those that believed in him, and loved him, dissuaded him from Judea, *ch.* xi. 8. [3.] Some think they hoped that if his miracles were wrought at Jerusalem the Pharisees and rulers would try them, and discover some cheat in them, which would justify their unbelief. So Dr. Whitby. [4.] Perhaps they were weary of his company in Galilee (for *are not all these that speak Galileans?)* and this was, in effect, a desire that he would *depart out of their coasts.* [5.] They causelessly insinuate that he neglected his disciples, and denied them such a *sight of his works* as was necessary to the support of their faith. [6.] They tacitly reproach him as *mean-spirited,* that he durst not enter the lists with the great men, nor trust himself upon the stage of public action, which, if he had any courage and *greatness of soul,* he would do, and not sneak thus and skulk in a corner; thus Christ's humility, and his humiliation, and the small figure which his religion has usually made in the world, have been often turned to the reproach of both *him* and *it.* [7.] They seem to question the truth of the miracles he wrought, in saying, "*If thou do these things*, if they will bear the test of a public scrutiny in the courts above, produce them there." [8.] They think Christ altogether such a one as themselves, as subject as they to worldly policy, and as desirous as they to *make a fair show in the flesh;* whereas he sought not honour from men. [9.] Self was at the bottom of all; they hoped, if he would make himself as great as he might, they, being his kinsmen, should share in his honour, and have respect paid them for his sake. Note, *First,* Many carnal people go to public ordinances, to worship at the feast, only to *show themselves,* and all their care is to make a *good appearance,* to present themselves handsomely to the world. *Secondly,* Many that seem to seek Christ's honour do really therein seek their own, and make it serve a turn for themselves.

2. The prudence and humility of our Lord Jesus, which appeared in his answer to the advice his brethren gave him, *v.* 6—8. Though there were so many base insinuations in it, he answered them mildly. Note, Even that which is said without *reason* should be answered without *passion;* we should learn of our Master to reply with meekness even to that which is most *impertinent* and *imperious,* and, where it is easy to find much amiss, to seem not to see it, and wink at the affront. They expected Christ's company with them to the feast, perhaps hoping he would bear their charges: but here,

(1.) He shows the difference between himself and them, in two things:—[1.] His *time* was *set,* so was not *theirs: My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready.* Understand it of the time of his going up to the feast. It was an indifferent thing to them when they went, for they had nothing of moment to do either where they were, to *detain* them *there,* or where they were going, to *hasten* them *thither;* but every minute of Christ's time was precious, and had its own particular business allotted to it. He had some work yet to do in Galilee before he left the country: in the harmony of the gospels betwixt this *motion* made by his kindred and his *going up* to this feast comes in the story of his sending forth the seventy disciples (Luke x. 1, &c.), which was an affair of very great consequence; his time is *not yet,* for that must be done first. Those who live useless lives have *their time always ready;* they can go and come when they please. But those whose *time* is filled up with *duty* will often find themselves *straitened,* and they have *not yet time* for that which others can do *at any time.* Those who are made the servants of God, as all men are, and who have made themselves the servants of all, as all useful men have, must not expect

nor covet to be *masters of their own time.* The confinement of business is a thousand times better than the liberty of idleness. Or, it may be meant of the *time* of his appearing publicly at Jerusalem; Christ, who knows all men and all things, knew that the best and most proper time for it would be about the *middle of the feast.* We, who are ignorant and short-sighted, are apt to prescribe to him, and to think he should deliver his people, and so show himself now. The present time is *our* time, but he is fittest to judge, and, it may be, *his time is not yet come;* his people are not yet ready for deliverance, nor his enemies ripe for ruin; let us therefore wait with patience for *his time,* for all he does will be most glorious in its season. [2.] His *life* was *sought,* so was not *theirs, v.* 7. They, in *showing themselves* to the world, did not expose themselves: "*The world cannot hate you,* for you are *of the world,* its children, its servants, and in with its interests; and no doubt the world will *love its own;*" see *ch.* xv. 19. Unholy souls, whom the holy God *cannot love,* the world that lies in wickedness *cannot hate;* but Christ, in showing himself to the world, laid himself open to the greatest danger; for *me it hateth.* Christ was not only *slighted,* as inconsiderable in the world *(the world knew him not),* but *hated,* as if he had been hurtful to the world; thus ill was he requited for his love to the world: reigning sin is a rooted antipathy and enmity to Christ. But why did the world hate Christ? What evil had he done to it? Had he, like Alexander, under colour of conquering it, laid it waste? "No, but because" (saith he) "*I testify of it, that the works of it are evil.*" Note, *First,* The works of an evil world are *evil works;* as the tree is, so are the fruits: it is a dark world, and an apostate world, and its works are works of darkness and rebellion. *Secondly,* Our Lord Jesus, both by himself and by his ministers, did and will both discover and testify against the evil works of this wicked world. *Thirdly,* It is a great uneasiness and provocation to the world to be convicted of the evil of its works. It is for the honour of virtue and piety that those who are impious and vicious do not care for hearing of it, for their own consciences make them *ashamed* of the turpitude there is *in* sin and *afraid* of the punishment that follows *after* sin. *Fourthly,* Whatever is *pretended,* the *real* cause of the world's enmity to the gospel is the testimony it bears against sin and sinners. Christ's witnesses by their doctrine and conversation *torment* those that dwell on the earth, and therefore are treated so barbarously, Rev. xi. 10. But it is better to incur the world's hatred, by testifying against its wickedness, than gain its good-will by going down the stream with it.

(2.) He dismisses them, with a design to stay behind for some time in Galilee (*v.* 8): *Go you up to this feast, I go not up yet.* [1.] He allows their going to the feast, though they were carnal and hypocritical in it. Note, Even those who go not to holy ordinances with right affections and sincere intentions must not be hindered nor discouraged from going; who knows but they may be wrought upon there? [2.] He denies them his company when they went to the feast, because they were carnal and hypocritical. Those who go to ordinances for ostentation, or to serve some secular purpose, go without Christ, and will speed accordingly. How sad is the condition of that man, though he reckon himself akin to Christ, to whom he saith, "*Go up* to such an ordinance, Go pray, Go hear the word, Go receive the sacrament, but *I go not up* with thee? *Go thou* and appear before God, but I will not appear *for thee,*" as Exod. xxxiii. 1—3. But, if the presence of Christ go not with us, to what purpose should we go up? *Go you up, I go not up.* When we are going to, or coming from, solemn ordinances, it becomes us to be careful what company we *have* and *choose,* and to avoid that which is vain and carnal, lest the coal of good affections be quenched by corrupt communication. *I go not up yet to this feast;* he does not say, I will not go up at all, but not yet. There may be reasons for deferring a particular duty, which yet must not be wholly omitted or laid aside; see Num. ix. 6—11. The reason he gives is, *My time is not yet fully come.* Note, Our Lord Jesus is very exact and punctual in knowing and keeping his time, and, as it was the time *fixed,* so it was the *best* time.

3. Christ's continuance in Galilee till his *full time* was come, *v.* 9. He, saying these things to them (τᾶυτα δὲ εἰπὼν), *abode still in Galilee;* because of this discourse he continued there; for, (1.) He would not be influenced by those who advised him to seek honour from men, nor go along with those who put him upon making a figure; he would not seem to countenance the temptation. (2.) He would not depart from his own purpose. He had said, upon a clear foresight and mature deliberation, that he would not go up yet to this feast, and therefore he abode still in Galilee. It becomes the followers of Christ thus to be *steady,* and not to *use lightness.*

4. His going up to the feast when his time was come. Observe, (1.) *When* he went: *When his brethren were gone up.* He would not go up *with them,* lest they should make a noise and disturbance, under pretence of *showing him to the world;* whereas it agreed both with the prediction and with his spirit not to *strive nor cry,* nor let his *voice be heard in the streets,* Isa. xlii. 2. But he went up *after them.* We may lawfully join in the same religious worship with those with whom we should yet decline an intimate acquaintance and converse; for the blessing of ordinances depends upon the grace of God, and not upon the grace of our fellow-worshippers. His carnal brethren went up *first,* and then

he went. Note, In the external performances of religion it is possible that formal hypocrites may *get the start* of those that are sincere. Many come *first to the temple* who are brought thither by vain-glory, and go thence unjustified, as he, Luke xviii. 11. It is not, Who comes *first?* that will be the question, but, Who comes *fittest?* If we bring our hearts *with us*, it is no matter who gets *before us*. (2.) *How* he went, ὡς ἐν κρυπτῷ—*as if he were hiding himself: not openly, but as it were in secret*, rather for fear of *giving offence* than of *receiving injury*. He went up to the feast, because it was an opportunity of honouring God and doing good; but he went up as it were in secret, because he would not provoke the government. Note, Provided the work of God be done effectually, it is best done when done with *least noise*. The kingdom of God need not come *with observation*, Luke xvii. 20. We may do the work of God *privately*, and yet not do it *deceitfully*.

5. The great expectation that there was of him among the Jews at Jerusalem, *v.* 11—14. Having formerly come up to the feasts, and signalized himself by the miracles he wrought, he had made himself the subject of much discourse and observation.

(1.) They could not but think of him (*v.* 11): *The Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?* [1.] The common people longed to see him there, that they might have their curiosity gratified with the sight of his person and miracles. They did not think it worth while to go to him into Galilee, though if they had they would not have lost their labour, but they hoped the feast would bring him to Jerusalem, and then they should see him. If an opportunity of acquaintance with Christ come to their door, they can like it well enough. They *sought him at the feast*. When we attend upon God in his holy ordinances, we should seek Christ in them, seek him at the gospel feasts. Those who would *see* Christ at a feast must *seek* him there. Or, [2.] Perhaps it was his enemies that were thus waiting an opportunity to seize him, and, if possible, to put an effectual stop to his progress. They said, *Where is he?* ποῦ ἔσιν ἐκεῖνος;—*where is that fellow?* Thus scornfully and contemptibly do they speak of him. Or it intimates how full their hearts were with thoughts of him, and their town with talk of him; they needed not name him. When they should have welcomed the feast as an opportunity of serving God, they were glad of it as an opportunity of persecuting Christ. Thus Saul hoped to slay David at the new moon, 1 Sam. xx. 27. Those who seek *opportunity to sin* in solemn assemblies for religious worship profane God's ordinances to the last degree, and defy him upon his own ground; it is like striking *within the verge of the court*.

(2.) The people differed much in their sentiments concerning him (*v.* 12): *There was much murmuring*, or *muttering* rather, *among the people concerning him*. The enmity of the rulers against Christ, and their enquiries after him, caused him to be so much the more talked of and observed among the people. This ground the gospel of Christ has got by the opposition made to it, that it has been the more enquired into, and, by being *every where spoken against*, it has come to be every where *spoken of*, and by this means has been spread the further, and the merits of his cause have been the more *searched into*. This murmuring was not *against* Christ, but *concerning* him; some murmured at the rulers, because they did not countenance and encourage him: others murmured at them, because they did not silence and restrain him. Some murmured that he had so great an interest in Galilee; others, that he had so little interest in Jerusalem. Note, Christ and his religion have been, and will be, the subject of much controversy and debate, Luke xii. 51, 52. If all would agree to entertain Christ as they ought, there would be perfect peace; but, when some receive the light and others resolve against it, there will be murmuring. The *bones in the valley*, while they were *dead* and *dry*, lay quiet; but when it was said unto them, *Live*, there was *a noise* and *a shaking*, Ezek. xxxvii. 7. But the noise and rencounter of liberty and business are preferable, surely, to the silence and agreement of a prison. Now what were the sentiments of the people concerning him? [1.] Some said, *He is a good man*. This was a truth, but it was far short of being the *whole truth*. He was not only a *good man*, but more than a man, he was the *Son of God*. Many who have no *ill* thoughts of Christ have yet *low* thoughts of him, and scarcely honour him, even when they speak well of him, because they do not *say enough*; yet indeed it was his honour, and the reproach of those who persecuted him, that even those who would not believe him to be the Messiah could not but own he was a *good man*. [2.] Others said, *Nay, but he deceiveth the people;* if this had been true, he had been a very bad man. The doctrine he preached was sound, and could not be contested; his miracles were real, and could not be disproved; his conversation was manifestly holy and good; and yet it must be taken for granted, notwithstanding, that there was some undiscovered cheat at the bottom, because it was the interest of the chief priests to oppose him and run him down. Such murmuring as there was among the Jews concerning Christ there is still among us: the Socinians say, *He is a good man*, and further they say not; the *deists* will not allow this, but say, *He deceived the people*. Thus some depreciate him, others abuse him, but *great is the truth*. [3.] They were frightened by their superiors from speaking much of him (*v.* 13): *No man spoke openly of him, for fear of the Jews*. Either, *First*, They durst not openly speak *well* of him. While any one was at liberty to cen-

sure and reproach him, none durst vindicate him. Or, *Secondly*, They durst not speak *at all* of him openly. Because nothing could justly be said *against* him, they would not suffer any thing to be said *of* him. It was a crime to name him. Thus many have aimed to suppress truth, under colour of silencing disputes about it, and would have all talk of religion hushed, in hopes thereby to bury in oblivion religion itself.

14 Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. 15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? 16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself. 18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. 19 Did not Moses give you the law, and *yet* none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers); and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. 23 If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? 24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. 25 Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? 26 But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? 27 Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. 28 Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. 29 But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. 30 Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. 31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done? 32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. 33 Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that sent me. 34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find *me:* and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come. 35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? 36 What *manner of* saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find *me:* and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

Here is, I. Christ's public preaching in the temple (*v.* 14): He *went up into the temple, and taught*, according to his custom when he was at Jerusalem. His business was to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and he did it in every place of concourse. His sermon is not recorded, because, probably, it was to the same purport with the sermons he had preached in Galilee, which were recorded by the other evangelists. For the gospel is the same to the *plain* and to the *polite*. But that which is observable here is that it was *about the midst of the feast;* the fourth or fifth day of the eight. Whether he did not come up to Jerusalem till the middle of the feast, or whether he came up at the beginning, but kept private till now, is not certain. But, *Query*, Why did he not go to the temple *sooner*, to preach? *Answer*, 1. Because the people would have more leisure to hear him, and, it might be hoped, would be better disposed to hear him, when they had spent some days in their booths, as they did at the feast of tabernacles. 2. Because he would choose to appear when both his friends and his enemies had done looking for him; and so give a specimen of the method he would observe in his appearances, which is to come at midnight, Matt. xxv. 6. But why did he appear thus publicly now? Surely it was to *shame* his persecutors, the

chief priests and elders. (1.) By showing that, though they were very bitter against him, yet he did not fear them, nor their power. See Isa. l. 7, 8. (2.) By taking their work out of their hands. Their office was to teach the people in the temple, and particularly at the *feast of tabernacles*, Neh. viii. 17, 18. But they either did not teach them at all or taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and therefore he goes up to the temple and teaches the people. When the shepherds of Israel made a prey of the flock it was time for the chief Shepherd to appear, as was promised. Ezek. xxxiv. 22, 23; Mal. iii. 1.

II. His discourse with the Jews hereupon; and the conference is reducible to four heads:

1. Concerning *his doctrine*. See here,

(1.) How the Jews *admired* it (*v.* 15): *They marvelled*, saying, *How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?* Observe here, [1.] That our Lord Jesus was not educated in the schools of the prophets, or at the feet of the rabbin; not only did not travel for learning, as the philosophers did, but did not make any use of the schools and academies in his own country. Moses was taught the learning of the Egyptians, but Christ was not taught so much as the learning of the Jews; having received the Spirit *without measure*, he needed not receive any knowledge *from man, or by man*. At the time of Christ's appearing, learning flourished both in the Roman empire and in the Jewish church more than in any age before or since, and in such a time of enquiry Christ chose to establish his religion, not in an illiterate age, lest it should look like a design to impose upon the world; yet he himself studied not the learning then in vogue. [2.] That Christ *had letters*, though he had never *learned* them; was mighty in the scriptures, though he never had any doctor of the law for his tutor. It is necessary that Christ's ministers should have *learning*, as he had; and since they cannot expect to have it as he had it, by inspiration, they must take pains to get it in an ordinary way. [3.] That Christ's having learning, though he had not been taught it, made him truly great and wonderful; the Jews speak of it here with wonder. *First*, Some, it is likely, took notice of it to his honour: He that had no human learning, and yet so far excelled all that had, certainly must be endued with a divine knowledge. *Secondly*, Others, probably, mentioned it in disparagement and contempt of him: Whatever he *seems* to have, he cannot really have any true learning, for he was never at the university, nor took his degree. *Thirdly*, Some perhaps suggested that he had got his learning by magic arts, or some unlawful means or other. Since they know not how he could be a scholar, they will think him a conjuror.

(2.) What he *asserted* concerning it; three things:—

[1.] That his *doctrine* is *divine* (*v.* 16): *My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.* They were offended because he undertook to *teach* though he had never learned, in answer to which he tells them that his doctrine was such as was not to be *learned*, for it was not the product of *human thought* and natural powers enlarged and elevated by reading and conversation, but it was a *divine revelation*. As God, equal with the Father, he might truly have said, *My doctrine is mine, and his that sent me;* but being now in his estate of humiliation, and being, as Mediator, God's servant, it was more congruous to say, "*My doctrine is not mine*, not mine only, nor mine originally, as man and mediator, but *his that sent me;* it does not centre in myself, nor lead ultimately to myself, but to him that sent me." God had promised concerning the great prophet that he would *put his words into his mouth* (Deut. xviii. 18), to which Christ seems here to refer. Note, It is the comfort of those who embrace Christ's doctrine, and the condemnation of those who reject it, that it is a divine doctrine: it is *of God and not of man*.

[2.] That the most competent judges of the truth and divine authority of Christ's doctrine are those that with a sincere and upright heart desire and endeavour to do the will of God (*v.* 17): *If any man be willing to do the will of God*, have his will melted into the *will of God, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself*. Observe here, *First*, What the question is, concerning the doctrine of Christ, *whether it be of God* or no; whether the gospel be a divine revelation or an imposture. Christ himself was willing to have his doctrine enquired into, whether it were of God or no, much more should his ministers; and we are concerned to examine what grounds we go upon, for, if we be deceived, we are miserably deceived. *Secondly*, Who are likely to succeed in this search: those that *do the will of God*, at least are desirous to do it. Now see, 1. Who they are that *will do the will of God*. They are such as are *impartial* in their enquiries concerning the will of God, and are not biassed by any lust or interest, and such as are resolved by the grace of God, when they find out what the will of God is, to conform to it. They are such as have an honest principle of regard to God, and are truly desirous to glorify and please him. 2. Whence it is that such a one shall know of the truth of Christ's doctrine. (1.) Christ has promised to *give knowledge* to such; he hath said, *He shall know*, and he can give an understanding. Those who improve the light they have, and carefully live up to it, shall be secured by divine grace from destructive mistakes. (2.) They are disposed and prepared to *receive* that knowledge. He that is inclined to submit to the rules of the divine law is disposed to admit the rays of divine light. *To him that has* shall be given; those have a *good understanding* that *do his*

commandments, Ps. cxi. 10. Those who *resemble* God are most likely to *understand* him.

[3.] That hereby it appeared that Christ, as a teacher, did not speak *of himself*, because he did not seek himself, *v.* 18. *First*, See here the character of a deceiver: he *seeketh his own glory*, which is a sign that he *speaks of himself*, as the false Christs and false prophets did. Here is the description of the *cheat:* they *speak of themselves*, and have no commission nor instructions from God; no warrant but their own will, no inspiration but their own imagination, their own policy and artifice. Ambassadors *speak not of themselves;* those ministers disclaim that character who glory in this that they *speak of themselves*. But see the discovery of the cheat; by this their pretensions are disproved, they consult purely *their own glory;* self-seekers are self-speakers. Those who speak *from God* will speak *for God*, and for his glory; those who aim at their own preferment and interest make it to appear that they had no commission from God. *Secondly*, See the contrary character Christ gives of himself and his doctrine: *He that seeks his glory that sent him*, as I do, makes it to appear that *he is true*. 1. He was *sent of God*. Those teachers, and those only, who are sent of God, are to be received and entertained by us. Those who bring a divine message must prove a divine mission, either by special revelation or by regular institution. 2. He *sought the glory of God*. It was both the tendency of his doctrine and the tenour of his whole conversation to *glorify God*. 3. This was a proof that he was *true*, and there was *no unrighteousness in him*. False teachers are most *unrighteous;* they are unjust to God whose name they abuse, and unjust to the souls of men whom they impose upon. There cannot be a greater piece of unrighteousness than this. But Christ made it appear that he was *true*, that he was really what he said he was, that there was *no unrighteousness* in him, no falsehood in his doctrine, no fallacy nor fraud in his dealings with us.

2. They discourse concerning the *crime* that was laid to his charge for curing the impotent man, and bidding him carry his bed on the sabbath day, for which they had formerly prosecuted him, and which was still the pretence of their enmity to him.

(1.) He argues against them by way of *recrimination*, convicting them of far worse practices, *v.* 19. How could they for shame censure him for a breach of the law of Moses, when they themselves were such notorious breakers of it? *Did not Moses give you the law?* And it was their privilege that they had the law, no nation had such a law; but it was their wickedness that *none of them kept the law*, that they rebelled against it, and lived contrary to it. Many that have the law given them, when they have it do not keep it. Their neglect of the law was universal: *None of you keepeth* it: neither those of them that were in *posts of honour*, who should have been most *knowing*, nor those who were in *posts of subjection*, who should have been most *obedient*. They boasted of the law, and pretended a zeal for it, and were enraged at Christ for seeming to transgress it, and yet none of them kept it; like those who say that they are for the church, and yet never go to church. It was an aggravation of their wickedness, in persecuting Christ for breaking the law, that they themselves did not keep it: "*None of you keepeth the law*, why then go ye about to kill me for not keeping it?" Note, Those are commonly most censorious of others who are most faulty themselves. Thus hypocrites, who are forward to pull a mote out of their brother's eye, are not aware of a beam in their own. *Why go ye about to kill me?* Some take this as the evidence of their not keeping the law: "*You keep not the law;* if you did, you would understand yourselves better than to go about to kill me for doing a good work." Those that support themselves and their interest by persecution and violence, whatever they pretend (though they may call themselves *custodes utriusque tabulæ —the guardians of both tables)*, are not keepers of the law of God. Chemnitius understands this as a reason why it was time to supersede the law of Moses by the gospel, because the law was found insufficient to *restrain sin:* "Moses gave you the law, but you do not keep it, nor are kept by it from the greatest wickedness; there is therefore need of a clearer light and better law to be brought in; why then do you aim to kill me for introducing it?"

Here the *people* rudely interrupted him in his discourse, and contradicted what he said (*v.* 20): *Thou hast a devil; who goes about to kill thee?* This intimates, [1.] The *good opinion* they had of their rulers, who, they think, would never attempt so atrocious a thing as to kill him; no, such a veneration they had for their elders and chief priests that they would swear for them they would do no harm to an innocent man. Probably the rulers had their little emissaries among the people who suggested this to them; many deny that wickedness which at the same time they are contriving. [2.] The *ill opinion* they had of our Lord Jesus: "*Thou hast a devil*, thou art possessed with a lying spirit, and art a *bad man* for saying so; so some: or rather, "Thou art melancholy, and art a *weak man;* thou frightenest thyself with causeless fears, as hypochondriacal people are apt to do." Not only open frenzies, but silent melancholies, were then commonly imputed to the power of Satan. "Thou art crazed, hast a distempered brain." Let us not think it strange if the best of men are put under the worst of characters. To this vile calumny our Saviour returns no direct answer, but seems as if he took no notice of

it. Note, Those who would be like Christ must put up with affronts, and pass by the indignities and injuries done them; must not *regard* them, much less *resent* them, and least of all *revenge* them. *I, as a deaf man, heard not.* When Christ was *reviled,* he *reviled not again.*

(2.) He argues by way of appeal and vindication.

[1.] He appeals to *their own sentiments* of this miracle: "*I have done one work, and you all marvel, v.* 21. You cannot choose but marvel at it as truly great, and altogether supernatural; you must all own it to be marvellous." Or, "Though I have done but *one work* that you have any colour to find fault with, yet you marvel, you are offended and displeased as if I had been guilty of some heinous or enormous crime."

[2.] He appeals to their own practice in other instances: "*I have done one work* on the sabbath, and it was done easily, with a word's speaking, and you all marvel, you make a mighty strange thing of it, that a religious man should dare do such a thing, whereas you yourselves *many a time* do that which is a much more servile work on the sabbath day, in the case of circumcision; if it be lawful for you, nay, and your duty, to circumcise a child on the sabbath day, when it happens to be the eighth day, as no doubt it is, much more was it lawful and good for me to heal a diseased man on that day." Observe,

First, The rise and origin of circumcision: *Moses gave you circumcision,* gave you the law concerning it. Here, 1. Circumcision is said to *be given,* and (*v.* 23) they are said to *receive* it; it was not imposed upon them as a yoke, but conferred upon them as a favour. Note, The ordinances of God, and particularly those which are seals of the covenant, are *gifts given to men,* and are to be received as such. 2. Moses is said to give it, because it was a part of that law which was *given by Moses;* yet, as Christ said of the manna (*ch.* vi. 32), Moses did not give it them, but God; nay, and it was not of Moses first, but *of the fathers, v.* 22. Though it was incorporated into the Mosaic institution, yet it was ordained long before, for it was a seal of the righteousness of faith, and therefore commenced with the promise four hundred and thirty years before, Gal. iii. 17. The church-membership of believers and their seed was not of Moses or his law, and therefore did not fall with it; but was *of the fathers,* belonged to the patriarchal church, and was part of that blessing of Abraham which was to come upon the Gentiles, Gal. iii. 14.

Secondly, The respect paid to the law of circumcision above that of the sabbath, in the constant practice of the Jewish church. The Jewish casuists frequently take notice of it, *Circumcisio et ejus sanatio pellit sabbatum —Circumcision and its cure drive away the sabbath;* so that if a child was born one sabbath day it was without fail circumcised the next. If then, when the *sabbath rest* was more strictly insisted on, yet those works were allowed which were *in ordine ad spiritualia—for the keeping up of religion,* much more are they allowed now under the gospel, when the stress is laid more upon the *sabbath work.*

Thirdly, The inference Christ draws hence in justification of himself, and of what he had done (*v.* 23): *A man-child on the sabbath day receives circumcision, that the law of circumcision might not be broken;* or, as the margin reads it, *without breaking the law,* namely, of the sabbath. Divine commands must be construed so as to agree with each other. "Now, if this be allowed by yourselves, how unreasonable are you, who are *angry with me because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day!*" ἐμοὶ χολατε. The word is used only here, from χολη —*fel, gall.* They were angry at him with the greatest indignation; it was a spiteful anger, anger with gall in it. Note, It is very absurd and unreasonable for us to condemn others for that in which we justify ourselves. Observe the comparison Christ here makes between their *circumcising a child* and his *healing a man* on the sabbath day. 1. Circumcision was but a ceremonial institution; it was *of the fathers* indeed, but not from the beginning; but what Christ did was a good work by the law of nature, a more excellent law than that which made circumcision a good work. 2. Circumcision was a *bloody* ordinance, and *made sore;* but what Christ did was healing, and made whole. The law works pain, and, if that work may be done on the sabbath day, much more a gospel work, which produces peace. 3. Especially considering that whereas, when they had circumcised a child, their care was only to heal up that part which was circumcised, which might be done and yet the child remain under other illnesses, Christ had made this man *every whit whole,* ολον ανθρωπον υγιῆ—*I have made the whole man healthful* and sound. The *whole body* was *healed,* for the disease affected the whole body; and it was a perfect cure, such as left no relics of the disease behind; nay, Christ not only healed his body, but his soul too, by that admonition, *Go, and sin no more,* and so indeed made the *whole man* sound, for the soul is the man. Circumcision indeed was intended for the good of the soul, and to make the *whole man* as it should be; but they had perverted it, and turned it into a mere carnal ordinance; but Christ accompanied his outward cures with inward grace, and so made them sacramental, and healed the *whole man.*

He concludes this argument with that rule (*v.* 24): *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* This may be applied, either, *First,* In particular, to this work which they quarrelled with as a violation

of the law. Be not partial in your judgment; judge not, *κατ' ὄψιν—with respect of persons;* knowing faces, as the Hebrew phrase is, Deut. i. 17. It is contrary to the law of justice, as well as charity, to censure those who differ in opinion from us as transgressors, in taking that liberty which yet in those of our own party, and way, and opinion, we allow of; as it is also to commend that in some as necessary strictness and severity which in others we condemn as imposition and persecution. Or, *Secondly,* In general, to Christ's person and preaching, which they were offended at and prejudiced against. Those things that are false, and designed to impose upon men, commonly appear best when they are judged of *according to the outward appearance,* they appear most plausible *prima facie —at the first glance.* It was this that gained the Pharisees such an interest and reputation, that they *appeared right* unto men (Matt. xxiii. 27, 28), and men judged of them by that appearance, and so were sadly mistaken in them. "But," saith Christ, "be not too confident that all are real saints who are seeming ones." With reference to himself, his *outward appearance* was far short of his real dignity and excellency, for he took upon him the *form of a servant* (Phil. ii. 7), was in the *likeness of sinful flesh* (Rom. viii. 3), had *no form nor comeliness,* Isa. liii. 2. So that those who undertook to judge whether he was the Son of God or no by his *outward appearance* were not likely to *judge righteous judgment.* The Jews expected the outward appearance of the Messiah to be pompous and magnificent, and attended with all the ceremonies of secular grandeur; and, judging of Christ by that rule, their judgment was from first to last a *continual* mistake, for the kingdom of Christ was not to be *of this world,* nor to *come with observation.* If a divine power accompanied him, and God bore him witness, and the scriptures were fulfilled in him, though his appearance was ever so mean, they ought to receive him, and to judge by faith, and not by the sight of the eye. See Isa. xi. 3, and 1 Sam. xvi. 7. Christ and his doctrine and doings desire nothing but *righteous judgment;* if truth and justice may but pass the sentence, Christ and his cause will carry the day. We must not judge concerning any by their *outward appearance,* not by their titles, the figure they make in the world, and their fluttering show, but by their intrinsic worth, and the gifts and graces of God's Spirit in them.

3. Christ discourses with them here concerning *himself,* whence he came, and whither he was going, *v.* 25—36.

(1.) *Whence he came, v.* 25—31. In the account of this observe,

[1.] The objection concerning this stated by some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who seem to have been of all others most prejudiced against him, *v.* 25. One would think that those who lived at the fountain-head of knowledge and religion should have been most ready to receive the Messiah: but it proved quite contrary. Those that have plenty of the means of knowledge and grace, if they are not *made better* by them, are commonly *made worse;* and our Lord Jesus has often met with the least welcome from those that one would expect the best from. But it was not without some just cause that it came into a proverb, *The nearer the church the further from God.* These people of Jerusalem showed their ill-will to Christ,

First, By their reflecting on the rulers, because they let him alone: *Is not this he whom they seek to kill?* The multitude of the people that came up out of the country to the feast did not suspect there was any design on foot against him, and therefore they said, *Who goes about to kill thee? v.* 20. But those of Jerusalem knew the plot, and irritated their rulers to put it into execution: "*Is not this he whom they seek to kill?* Why do they not do it then? Who hinders them? They say that they have a mind to get him out of the way, and yet, lo, *he speaketh boldly,* and *they say nothing to him;* do *the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?*" *v.* 26. Here they slily and maliciously insinuate two things, to exasperate the rulers against Christ, when indeed they needed no spur. 1. That by conniving at his preaching they *brought their authority into contempt.* "Must a man that is condemned by the *sanhedrim* as a deceiver be permitted to *speak boldly,* without any check or contradiction? This makes their sentence to be but *brutem fulmen —a vain menace;* if our rulers will suffer themselves to be thus trampled upon, they may thank themselves if none stand in awe of them and their laws." Note, The worst of persecutions have often been carried on under colour of the necessary support of authority and government. 2. That hereby they brought *their judgment* into *suspicion: Do they know that this is the Christ?* It is spoken ironically. "How came they to change their mind? What new discovery have they lighted on? They give people occasion to think that they believe him to be the Christ, and it behoves them to act vigorously against him to clear themselves from the suspicion." Thus the rulers, who had made the people enemies to Christ, made them *seven times more the children of hell than themselves,* Matt. xxiii. 15. When religion and the profession of Christ's name are *out of fashion,* and consequently *out of repute,* many are strongly tempted to persecute and oppose them, only that they may not be thought to favour them and incline to them. And for this reason apostates, and the degenerate offspring of good parents, have been sometimes worse than others, as it were to wipe off the stain of their profession. It was strange that the rulers, thus irritated, did not seize Christ; but his hour was not yet come; and God can tie men's hands to

admiration, though he should not turn their hearts.

Secondly, By their exception against his being the Christ, in which appeared more malice than matter, *v.* 27. "If the rulers think him to be the Christ, we neither can nor will believe him to be so, for we have this argument against it, that *we know this man, whence he is; but when Christ comes no man knows whence he is.*" Here is a fallacy in the argument, for the propositions are not both *ad idem—adapted to the same view of the subject.* 1. If they speak of his *divine nature*, it is true that when Christ comes *no man knows whence he is*, for he is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, who was *without descent*, and *his goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*, Mic. v. 2. But then it is not true that as for this man they knew whence he was, for they knew not his divine nature, nor how *the Word* was *made flesh.* 2. If they speak of his *human nature*, it is true that they knew whence he was, who was his mother, and where he was bred up; but then it is false that ever it was said of the Messiah that none should know whence he was, for it was known before *where he should be born*, Matt. ii. 4, 5. Observe, (1.) How they *despised him*, because they knew *whence he was.* Familiarity breeds contempt, and we are apt to disdain the *use* of those whom we know the *rise of.* Christ's own received him not, because he was *their own*, for which very reason they should the rather have loved him, and been thankful that their nation and their age were honoured with his appearance. (2.) How they endeavoured unjustly to fasten the ground of their prejudice upon the scriptures, as if they countenanced them, when there was no such thing. *Therefore* people err concerning Christ, because they *know not the scripture.*

[2.] Christ's answer to this objection, *v.* 28, 29.

First, He spoke freely and boldly, he *cried in the temple, as he taught*, he spoke this louder than the rest of his discourse, 1. To express his earnestness, being *grieved for the hardness of their hearts.* There may be a vehemency in contending for the truth where yet there is no intemperate heat nor passion. We may instruct gainsayers with warmth, and yet with *meekness.* 2. The priests and those that were prejudiced against him, did not come near enough to hear his preaching, and therefore he must speak louder than ordinary what he will have them to hear. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear this.

Secondly, His answer to their cavil is, 1. By way of *concession*, granting that they did or might know his origin as to the flesh: "*You both know me, and you know whence I am.* You know I am of your own nation, and one of yourselves." It is no disparagement to the doctrine of Christ that there is that in it which is level to the capacities of the meanest, plain truths, discovered even by nature's light, of which we may say, We know whence they are. "*You know me*, you think you know me; but you are mistaken; you take me to be the carpenter's son, and born at Nazareth, but it is not so." 2. By way of *negation*, denying that that which they did see in him, and know of him, was all that was to be known; and therefore, if they looked no further, they judged by the outward appearance only. They knew *whence* he came perhaps, and *where* he had his birth, but he will tell them what they knew not, *from whom* he came. (1.) That he did not *come of himself;* that he did not run without sending, nor come as a private person, but with a public character. (2.) That he was sent of his Father; this is twice mentioned: *He hath sent me.* And again, "*He hath sent me*, to say what I say, and do what I do." This he was himself well assured of, and therefore knew that his Father would bear him out; and it is well for us that we are assured of it too, that we may with holy confidence go to God by him. (3.) That he was *from his Father*, παρ αὐτοῦ εἰμι—*I am from him;* not only sent from him as a servant from his master, but from him by eternal generation, as a son from his father, by essential emanation, as the beams from the sun. (4.) *That the Father who sent him is true;* he had promised to give the Messiah, and, though the Jews had forfeited the promise, yet he that made the promise is *true*, and has performed it. He had promised that the Messiah should see his seed, and be successful in his undertaking; and, though the generality of the Jews reject him and his gospel, yet he *is true*, and will fulfil the promise in the calling of the Gentiles. (5.) That these unbelieving Jews did *not know the Father: He that sent me, whom you know not.* There is much ignorance of God even with many that have a *form of knowledge;* and the true reason why people reject Christ is because they do not *know God;* for there is such a harmony of the divine attributes in the work of redemption, and such an admirable agreement between natural and revealed religion, that the right knowledge of the former would not only admit, but introduce, the latter. (6.) Our Lord Jesus was intimately acquainted with the Father that *sent him: but I know him.* He knew him so well that he was not at all *in doubt* concerning his mission from him, but perfectly *assured* of it; nor at all *in the dark* concerning the work he had to do, but perfectly *apprized* of it, Matt. xi. 27.

[3.] The provocation which this gave to his enemies, who hated him because he *told them the truth*, *v.* 30. *They sought therefore to take him*, to lay violent hands on him, not only to do him a mischief, but some way or other to be the death of him; but by the restraint of an invisible power it was prevented; nobody touched him, *because his hour was not yet come;* this was not their reason why

they did it not, but God's reason why he hindered them from doing it. Note, *First*, The faithful preachers of the truths of God, though they behave themselves with ever so much prudence and meekness, must expect to be hated and persecuted by those who think themselves tormented by their testimony, Rev. xi. 10. *Secondly*, God has wicked men in a chain, and, whatever mischief they *would do*, they *can do* no more than God will suffer them to do. The malice of persecutors is *impotent* even when it is most *impetuous*, and, when Satan *fills their hearts*, yet God *ties their hands*. *Thirdly*, God's servants are sometimes wonderfully protected by indiscernible unaccountable means. Their enemies do not do the mischief they designed, and yet neither they themselves nor any one else can tell why they do not. *Fourthly*, Christ had *his hour* set, which was to put a period to his day and work on earth; so have all his people and all his ministers, and, till that hour comes, the attempts of their enemies against them are ineffectual, and their day shall be lengthened as long as their Master has any work for them to do; nor can all the powers of hell and earth prevail against them, until they have *finished their testimony*.

[4.] The good effect which Christ's discourse had, notwithstanding this, upon some of his hearers (*v.* 31): *Many of the people believed on him.* As he was set for the fall of some, so for the rising again of others. Even where the gospel meets with opposition there may yet be a great deal of good done, 1 Thess. ii. 2. Observe here, *First*, *Who* they were that believed; not a few, but many, more than one would have expected when the stream ran so strongly the other way. But these *many* were *of the people*, ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου—*of the multitude*, the crowd, the inferior sort, the mob, the rabble, some would have called them. We must not measure the prosperity of the gospel by its success among the great ones; nor must ministers say that they labour in vain, though none but the *poor*, and those of no *figure*, receive the gospel, 1 Cor. i. 26. *Secondly*, What *induced* them to believe: the *miracles which he did*, which were not only the accomplishment of the Old-Testament prophecies (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6), but an argument of a divine power. He that had an ability to do that which none but God *can do*, to control and overrule the powers of nature, no doubt had authority to enact that which none but God can *enact*, a law that shall *bind conscience*, and a covenant that shall *give life*. *Thirdly*, How *weak* their faith was: they do not positively assert, as the Samaritans did, *This is indeed the Christ*, but they only argue, *When Christ comes will he do more miracles than these?* They take it for granted that Christ will come, and, when he comes, will do many miracles. "Is not this he then? In him we see, though not all the worldly pomp we have fancied, yet all the divine power we have *believed* the Messiah should appear in; and therefore why may not this be he?" They *believe* it, but have not courage to own it. Note, Even weak faith may be true faith, and so *accounted*, so *accepted*, by the Lord Jesus, who *despises not the day of small things*.

(2.) *Whither he was going*, *v.* 32—36. Here observe,

[1.] The design of the Pharisees and chief priests against him, *v.* 32. *First*, The provocation given them was that they had information brought them by their spies, who insinuated themselves into the conversation of the people, and gathered stories to carry to their jealous masters, that *the people murmured such things concerning him*, that there were many who had a respect and value for him, notwithstanding all they had done to render him odious. Though the people did but whisper these things, and had not courage to speak out, yet the Pharisees were enraged at it. The equity of that government is justly *suspected* by others which is so *suspicious* of itself as to take notice of, or be influenced by, the secret, various, uncertain *mutterings* of the common people. The Pharisees valued themselves very much upon the respect of the people, and were sensible that if Christ did thus *increase* they must *decrease*. *Secondly*, The project they laid hereupon was to seize Jesus, and take him into custody: *They sent officers to take him*, not to take up those who murmured concerning him and frighten them; no, the most effectual way to disperse the flock is to *smite the shepherd*. The Pharisees seem to have been the ringleaders in this prosecution, but they, *as such*, had no power, and therefore they got the *chief priests*, the judges of the ecclesiastical court, to join with them, who were ready enough to do so. The Pharisees were the great pretenders to *learning*, and the *chief priests* to *sanctity*. As *the world by wisdom knew not God*, but the greatest philosophers were guilty of the greatest blunders in natural religion, so the Jewish church by their wisdom knew not Christ, but their greatest rabbin were the greatest fools concerning him, nay, they were the most inveterate enemies to him. Those wicked rulers had their officers, officers of their court, church-officers, whom they employed to take Christ, and who were ready to go on their errand, though it was an ill errand. If Saul's footmen will not *turn and fall upon the priests of the Lord*, he has a herdsman that will, 1 Sam xxii. 17, 18.

[2.] The discourse of our Lord Jesus hereupon (*v.* 33, 34): *Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to him that sent me; you shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither you cannot come.* These words, like the pillar of cloud and fire, have a *bright* side and a *dark* side.

First, They have a *bright side* towards

our Lord Jesus himself, and speak abundance of comfort to him and all his faithful followers that are exposed to difficulties and dangers for his sake. Three things Christ here comforted himself with:—1. That he had but *a little time* to continue here in this troublesome world. He sees that he is never likely to have a quiet day among them; but the best of it is his warfare will shortly be accomplished, and then he shall be *no more in this world ch.* xvii. 11. Whomsoever we are *with* in this world, friends or foes, it is but a *little while* that we shall be with them; and it is a matter of comfort to those who are *in* the world, but not *of* it, and therefore are hated by it and sick of it, that they shall not be *in it always*, they shall not be *in it long.* We must be *awhile* with those that are pricking briars and grieving thorns; but thanks be to God, it is but a little while, and we shall be out of their reach. Our days being *evil*, it is well they are *few.* 2. That, when he should quit this troublesome world, he should *go to him that sent him; I go.* Not, "I am driven away by force," but, "I voluntarily *go;* having finished my embassy, I return to him on whose errand I came. When I have done my work with you, then, and not till then, I go to him *that sent me*, and will *receive me*, will prefer me, as ambassadors are preferred when they return." Their rage against him would not only not hinder him from, but would hasten him to the glory and joy that were set before him. Let those who suffer for Christ comfort themselves with this, that they have a God to go to, and are going to him, going apace, to be for ever with him. 3. That, though they persecuted him here, wherever he went, yet none of their persecutions could follow him to heaven: *You shall seek me, and shall not find me.* It appears, by their enmity to his followers when he was gone, that if they could have reached him they would have persecuted him: "But you cannot enter into that temple as you do into this." *Where I am*, that is, where I then *shall be;* but he expresses it thus because, even when he was on earth, by his divine nature and divine affections he was in heaven, *ch.* iii. 13. Or it denotes that he should be *so soon* there that he was as good as there already. Note, It adds to the happiness of glorified saints that they are out of the reach of the devil and all his wicked instruments.

Secondly, These words have a *black and dark side* towards those wicked Jews that hated and persecuted Christ. They now longed to be rid of him, *Away with him from the earth;* but let them know, 1. That according to their choice so shall their doom be. They were industrious to *drive him* from them, and their sin shall be their punishment; he will not trouble them long, yet a little while and he will *depart* from them. It is just with God to forsake those that think his presence a burden. They that are weary of Christ need no more to make them miserable than to have *their wish.* 2. That they would certainly repent their choice when it was too late. (1.) They should in vain seek the presence of the Messiah: "*You shall seek me, and shall not find me.* You shall expect the *Christ to come*, but your eyes shall fail with looking for him, and you shall never find him." Those who rejected the true Messiah when he did come were justly abandoned to a miserable and endless expectation of one that should never come. Or, it may refer to the final rejection of sinners from the favours and grace of Christ at the great day: those who now seek Christ shall find him, but the day is coming when those who now refuse him *shall seek him, and shall not find him.* See Prov. i. 28. They will in vain cry, *Lord, Lord, open to us.* Or, perhaps, these words might be fulfilled in the despair of some of the Jews, who possibly might be convinced and not converted, who would wish in vain to see Christ, and to hear him preach again; but the day of grace is over (Luke xvii. 22); yet this is not all. (2.) They should in vain expect a place in heaven: *Where I am*, and where all believers shall be with me, *thither ye cannot come.* Not only because they are *excluded* by the just and irreversible sentence of the judge, and the sword of the angel at every gate of the new Jerusalem, to keep *the way of the tree of life* against those who have *no right to enter*, but because they are disabled by their own iniquity and infidelity: *You cannot come*, because you *will not.* Those who hate to be where Christ is, in his word and ordinances on earth, are very unfit to be where he is in his glory in heaven; for indeed heaven would be no heaven to them, such are the antipathies of an unsanctified soul to the felicities of that state.

[3.] Their descant upon this discourse (*v.* 35, 36): *They said among themselves, Whither will he go?* See here, *First*, Their wilful ignorance and blindness. He had expressly said whither he would go—to him that sent him, to his Father in heaven, and yet they ask, *Whither will he go?* and, *What manner of saying is this?* None so blind as those that will not see, that will not heed. Christ's sayings are *plain to him that understandeth*, and difficult only to those that are disposed to quarrel. *Secondly*, Their daring contempt of Christ's threatenings. Instead of trembling at that terrible word, *You shall seek me, and not find me*, which denotes the utmost degree of misery, they banter it and make a jest of it, as those sinners that *mock at fear, and are not affrighted* Isa. v. 19; Amos v. 18. *Let him make speed. But be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong. Thirdly*, Their inveterate malice and rage against Christ. All they dreaded in his *departure* was that he would be out of the reach of their power: "*Whither will he go, that we shall not find him?* If he be above ground,

we will have him; we will leave no place unsearched," as Ahab in quest of Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 10. *Fourthly*, Their proud disdain of the Gentiles, whom they here call the *dispersed of the Gentiles;* meaning either the Jews that were *scattered* abroad among the Greeks (James i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 1); will he go and make an interest among those silly people? or, the Gentiles *dispersed* over the world, in distinction from the Jews, who were *incorporated* into one church and nation; will he make his court to them? *Fifthly*, Their jealousy of the least intimation of favour to the Gentiles: "Will he go and *teach the Gentiles?* Will he carry his doctrine to them?" Perhaps they had heard of some items of respect shown by him to the Gentiles, as in his sermon at Nazareth, and in the case of the centurion and the woman of Canaan, and there was nothing they dreaded more than the *comprehension* of the Gentiles. So common is it for those who have lost the power of religion to be very jealous for the monopoly of the name. They now made a *jest* of his going *to teach the Gentiles;* but not long after he did it *in good earnest* by his apostles and ministers, and gathered those *dispersed* people, sorely to the grief of the Jews, Rom. x. 19. So true is that of Solomon, *The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him.*

37 In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given;* because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) 40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the prophet. 41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? 42 Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? 43 So there was a division among the people because of him. 44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

In these verses we have,

I. Christ's discourse, with the explication of it, *v.* 37—39. It is probable that these are only short hints of what he enlarged upon, but they have in them the substance of the whole gospel; here is a *gospel invitation* to *come to Christ*, and a *gospel promise* of comfort and happiness in him. Now observe,

1. *When* he gave this invitation: *On the last day* of the feast of tabernacles, *that great day.* The *eighth day*, which concluded that solemnity, was to be a *holy convocation*, Lev. xxiii. 36. Now on this day Christ published this gospel-call, because, (1.) Much people were gathered together, and, if the invitation were given to *many*, it might be hoped that *some* would accept of it, Prov. i. 20. Numerous assemblies give opportunity of doing the more good. (2.) The people were now returning to their homes, and he would give them this to carry away with them as his parting word. When a great congregation is to be dismissed, and is about to scatter, as here, it is affecting to think that in all probability they will never come all together again in this world, and therefore, if we can say or do any thing to help them to heaven, that must be the time. It is good to be lively at the close of an ordinance. Christ made this offer *on the last day of the feast*, [1.] To those who had turned a deaf ear to his preaching on the foregoing days of this sacred week; he will try them once more, and, if they will yet hear his voice, they shall live. [2.] To those who perhaps might never have such another offer made them, and therefore were concerned to accept of this; it would be half a year before there would be another feast, and in that time they would many of them be in their graves. *Behold now is the accepted time.*

2. *How* he gave this invitation: *Jesus stood and cried*, which denotes, (1.) His great earnestness and importunity. His heart was upon it, to bring poor souls in to himself. The erection of his body and the elevation of his voice were indications of the intenseness of his mind. Love to souls will make preachers lively. (2.) His desire that all might take notice, and take hold of this invitation. He *stood, and cried*, that he might the better be heard; for this is what every one that hath ears is concerned to hear. Gospel truth seeks no corners, because it fears no trials. The heathen oracles were delivered privately by them that *peeped and muttered;* but the oracles of the gospel were proclaimed by one that *stood, and cried.* How sad is the case of man, that he must be *importuned* to be happy, and how wonderful the grace of Christ, that he will *importune* him! *Ho, every one*, Isa. lv. 1.

3. The invitation itself is very general: *If any man* thirst, whoever he be, he is invited to Christ, be he high or low, rich or poor, young or old, bond or free, Jew or Gentile. It is also very *gracious:* "*If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.* If any man desires to be truly and eternally happy, let him apply himself to me, and be ruled by me, and I will undertake to make him so."

(1.) The persons invited are such as *thirst*, which may be understood, either, [1.] Of the *indigence* of their cases; either as to their *outward* condition (if any man be destitute of the comforts of this life, or fatigued with the crosses of it, let his poverty and afflictions draw him to Christ for that peace which the world can neither give nor take away), or as to their *inward* state: "If any man want spiritual blessings, he may be supplied by me." Or, [2.] Of the *inclination* of their souls and their desires towards a spiritual happiness. If any man hunger and thirst after righteousness, that is, truly desire the good will of God towards him, and the good work of God in him.

(2.) The invitation itself: *Let him come to me.* Let him not go to the ceremonial law, which would neither *pacify* the conscience nor *purify it*, and therefore could not make the *comers thereunto perfect*, Heb. x. 1. Nor let him go to the heathen philosophy, which does but beguile men, lead them into a wood, and leave them there; but let him *go to Christ*, admit his doctrine, submit to his discipline, believe in him; come to him as the fountain of living waters, the giver of all comfort.

(3.) The satisfaction promised: Let him come *and drink*, he shall have what he comes for, and abundantly more, shall have that which will not only *refresh*, but *replenish*, a soul that desires to be happy."

4. A gracious promise annexed to this gracious call (*v.* 38): *He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow*— (1.) See here what it is to come to Christ: It is *to believe on him, as the scripture hath said;* it is to receive and entertain him as he is offered to us in the gospel. We must not frame a Christ according to our fancy, but believe in a Christ according to the scripture. (2.) See how thirsty souls, that come to Christ, shall be made *to drink*. Israel, that believed Moses, drank of the *rock that followed them*, the streams followed; but believers drink of a rock *in them, Christ in them;* he is in them a *well of living water*, *ch.* iv. 14. Provision is made not only for their *present* satisfaction, but for their *continual perpetual* comfort. Here is, [1.] *Living water, running* water, which the Hebrew language calls *living*, because still in motion. The graces and comforts of the Spirit are compared to *living* (meaning *running) water*, because they are the active quickening principles of spiritual life, and the earnests and beginnings of eternal life. See Jer. ii. 13. [2.] *Rivers* of living water, denoting both plenty and constancy. The comfort flows in both *plentifully* and *constantly* as a river; strong as a stream to bear down the oppositions of doubts and fears. There is a fulness in Christ of grace for grace. [3.] These flow out *of his belly*, that is, out of his heart or soul, which is the subject of the Spirit's working and the seat of his government. There *gracious principles* are planted; and out of the heart, in which the Spirit dwells, flow the *issues of life*, Prov. iv. 23. There divine comforts are lodged, and the *joy* that a *stranger doth not intermeddle with. He that believes has the witness in himself*, 1 John v. 10. *Sat lucis intus—Light abounds within.* Observe, further, where there are *springs* of grace and comfort in the soul they will *send forth streams: Out of his belly shall flow rivers. First*, Grace and comfort will *evidence themselves.* Good affections will produce good actions, and a holy heart will be seen in a holy life; the tree is known by its fruits, and the fountain by its streams. *Secondly*, They will *communicate themselves* for the benefit of others; a good man is a common good. His *mouth* is a *well of life*, Prov. x. 11. It is not enough that we *drink waters out of our own cistern*, that we ourselves take the comfort of the grace given us, but we must let our *fountains* be *dispersed abroad*, Prov. v. 15, 16.

Those words, *as the scripture hath said*, seem to refer to some promise in the Old Testament to this purport, and there are many; as that God would *pour out* his Spirit, which is a metaphor borrowed from waters (Prov. i. 23; Joel ii. 28; Isa. xliv. 3; Zech. xii. 10); that the *dry land* should become *springs of water* (Isa. xli. 18); that there should be *rivers in the desert* (Isa. xliii. 19); that gracious souls should be like a *spring of water* (Isa. lviii. 11); and the church a *well of living water*, Cant. iv. 15. And here may be an allusion to the waters issuing out of Ezekiel's temple, Ezek. xlvii. 1. Compare Rev. xxii. 1, and see Zech. xiv. 8. Dr. Lightfoot and others tell us it was a custom of the Jews, which they received by tradition, *the last day of the feast* of tabernacles to have a solemnity, which they called *Libatio aquæ—The pouring out of water.* They fetched a golden vessel of water from the pool of Siloam, brought it into the temple with sound of trumpet and other ceremonies, and, upon the ascent to the altar, poured it out before the Lord with all possible expressions of joy. Some of their writers make the water to signify *the law*, and refer to Isa. xii. 3; lv. 1. Others, *the Holy Spirit.* And it is thought that our Saviour might here allude to this custom. Believers shall have the comfort, not of a vessel of water fetched from a pool, but of a river flowing from themselves. The joy of the law, and the pouring out of the water, which signified this, are not to be compared with the joy of the gospel in the wells of salvation.

5. Here is the evangelist's exposition of this promise (*v.* 39): *This spoke he of the Spirit:* not of any outward advantages accruing to believers (as perhaps some misunderstood him), but of the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Spirit. See how scripture is the best interpreter of scripture. Observe,

(1.) It is promised to *all that believe* on

Christ that they shall *receive the Holy Ghost.* Some received his miraculous gifts (Mark xvi. 17, 18); all receive his sanctifying graces. The gift of the Holy Ghost is one of the great blessings promised in the new covenant (Acts ii. 39), and, if *promised,* no doubt *performed* to all that have an interest in that covenant.

(2.) The Spirit dwelling and working in believers is as a *fountain of living* running *water,* out of which plentiful streams flow, cooling and cleansing as water, mollifying and moistening as water, making them fruitful, and others joyful; see *ch.* iii. 5. When the apostles spoke so *fluently* of the things of God, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts ii. 4), and afterwards preached and wrote the gospel of Christ with such a *flood* of divine eloquence, then this was fulfilled, *Out of his belly shall flow rivers.*

(3.) This plentiful effusion of the Spirit was yet the matter of a promise; for *the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* See here, [1.] That *Jesus was not yet glorified.* It was certain that he should be glorified, and he was ever worthy of all honour; but he was as yet in a state of humiliation and contempt. He had never forfeited the glory he had before all worlds, nay, he had *merited* a further glory, and, besides his *hereditary* honours, might claim the *achievement* of a *mediatorial* crown; and yet all this is in reversion. Jesus is now *upheld* (Isa. xlii. 1), is now *satisfied* (Isa liii. 11), is now *justified* (1 Tim. iii. 16), but he is *not yet glorified.* And, if Christ must wait for his glory, let not us think it much to wait for ours. [2.] That *the Holy Ghost was not yet given.* οὔπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα—*for the Holy Ghost was not yet.* The Spirit of God was from eternity, for in the beginning he *moved upon the face of the waters.* He was in the Old-Testament prophets and saints, and Zacharias and Elisabeth were both *filled with the Holy Ghost.* This therefore must be understood of that eminent, plentiful, and general effusion of the Spirit which was promised, Joel ii. 28, and accomplished, Acts ii. 1, &c. *The Holy Ghost was not yet given* in that visible manner that was intended. If we compare the clear knowledge and strong grace of the disciples of Christ themselves, after the day of Pentecost, with their darkness and weakness before, we shall understand in what sense *the Holy Ghost was not yet given;* the earnests and first-fruits of the Spirit were given, but the full harvest was not yet come. That which is most properly called the *dispensation of the Spirit* did not yet commence. The *Holy Ghost* was *not yet given* in such rivers of living water as should issue forth to water the whole earth, even the Gentile world, not in the *gifts of tongues,* to which perhaps this promise principally refers. [3.] That the reason why *the Holy Ghost was not given* was because *Jesus was not yet glorified. First,* The death of Christ is sometimes called his glorification (*ch.* xiii. 31); for in his cross he conquered and triumphed. Now the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased by the blood of Christ: this was the *valuable consideration* upon which the *grant* was grounded, and therefore till this *price* was *paid* (though many other gifts were bestowed upon its being *secured* to be paid) the Holy Ghost was not given. *Secondly,* There was not so much need of the Spirit, while Christ himself was here upon earth, as there was when he was gone, to supply the want of him. *Thirdly,* The giving of the Holy Ghost was to be both an *answer* to Christ's *intercession* (*ch.* xiv. 16), and an *act* of his *dominion;* and therefore till he is glorified, and enters upon both these, the Holy Ghost is not given. *Fourthly,* The conversion of the Gentiles was the glorifying of Jesus. When certain Greeks began to enquire after Christ, he said, *Now is the Son of man glorified, ch.* xii. 23. Now the time when the gospel should be propagated in the nations was not yet come, and therefore there was as yet no occasion for the *gift of tongues,* that *river of living water.* But observe, though the Holy Ghost was not yet given, yet he was *promised;* it was now the great *promise of the Father,* Acts i. 4. Though the gifts of Christ's grace are *long deferred,* yet they are *well secured:* and, while we are waiting for the good promise, we have the promise to live upon, which *shall speak and shall not lie.*

II. The consequents of this discourse, what entertainment it met with; in general, it occasioned differences: *There was a division among the people because of him, v.* 43. There was *a schism,* so the word is; there were diversities of opinions, and those managed with heat and contention; various sentiments, and those such as set them at *variance.* Think we that Christ came to send peace, that all would unanimously embrace his gospel? No, the effect of the preaching of his gospel would be *division,* for, while some are *gathered to it,* others will be *gathered against it;* and this will put things into a *ferment,* as here; but this is no more the fault of the gospel than it is the fault of a wholesome medicine that it stirs up the *peccant* humours in the body, in order to the discharge of them. Observe what the debate was:—

1. Some were *taken with him,* and well affected to him: *Many of the people, when they heard this saying,* heard him with such compassion and kindness invite poor sinners to him, and with such authority engage to make them happy, that they could not but think highly of him. (1.) Some of them said, *O, a truth this is the prophet,* that prophet whom Moses spoke of to the fathers, who should be *like unto him;* or, This is *the prophet* who, according to the received notions of the Jewish church, is to be the harbinger and forerunner of the Messiah; or, *This is truly a prophet,* one divinely inspired and sent of God. (2.) Others went further, and said,

This is the Christ (*v.* 41), not the *prophet* of the Messiah, but the Messiah himself. The Jews had at this time a more than ordinary expectation of the Messiah, which made them ready to say upon every occasion, *Lo, here is Christ*, or *Lo, he is there;* and this seems to be only the effect of some such confused and floating notions which caught at the first appearance, for we do not find that these people became his disciples and followers; a good opinion of Christ is far short of a lively faith in Christ; many give Christ a good word that give him no more. These here said, *This is the prophet*, and *this is the Christ*, but could not persuade themselves to leave all and follow him; and so this their testimony to Christ was but a testimony *against themselves.*

2. Others were *prejudiced against him.* No sooner was this great truth started, that *Jesus is the Christ*, than immediately it was contradicted and argued against: and this one thing, that his rise and origin were (as they took it for granted) out of Galilee, was thought enough to answer all the arguments for his being the Christ. For, *shall Christ come out of Galilee?* Has not *the scripture said that Christ comes of the seed of David?* See here, (1.) A laudable knowledge of the scripture. They were so far in the right, that the Messiah was to be a *rod out of the stem of Jesse* (Isa. xi. 1), that out of Bethlehem should *arise the Governor*, Mic. v. 2. This even the common people knew by the traditional expositions which their scribes gave them. Perhaps the people who had these scriptures so ready to object against Christ were not alike knowing in other parts of holy writ, but had had these put into their mouths by their leaders, to fortify their prejudices against Christ. Many that espouse some corrupt notions, and spend their zeal in defence of them, seem to be very ready in the scriptures, when indeed they know little more than those scriptures which they have been taught to *pervert.* (2.) A culpable ignorance of our Lord Jesus. They speak of it as certain and past dispute that *Jesus was of Galilee*, whereas by enquiring of himself, or his mother, or his disciples, or by consulting the genealogies of the family of David, or the register at Bethlehem, they might have known that he was the Son of David, and a native of Bethlehem; but *this they willingly are ignorant of.* Thus gross falsehoods in matters of fact, concerning persons and things, are often taken up by prejudiced and partial men, and great resolves founded upon them, even in the same place and the same age wherein the persons live and the things are done, while the truth might easily be found out.

3. Others were *enraged against him*, and they *would have taken him*, *v.* 44. Though what he said was most sweet and gracious, yet they were exasperated against him for it. Thus did our Master suffer ill for saying and doing well. *They would have taken him;* they hoped somebody or other would seize him, and, if they had thought no one else would, they would have done it themselves. They *would have taken him;* but no man *laid hands on him*, being restrained by an invisible power, because his hour was not come. As the malice of Christ's enemies is always *unreasonable*, so sometimes the suspension of it is *unaccountable.*

45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. 47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? 48 Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? 49 But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. 50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) 51 Doth our law judge *any* man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? 52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. 53 And every man went unto his own house.

The chief priests and Pharisees are here in a close cabal, contriving how to suppress Christ; though this was the *great day of the feast*, they attended not the religious services of the day, but left them to the vulgar, to whom it was common for those great ecclesiastics to consign and turn over the business of devotion, while they thought themselves better employed in the affairs of church-policy. They sat in the council-chamber, expecting Christ to be brought a prisoner to them, as they had issued out warrants for apprehending him, *v.* 32. Now here we are told,

I. What passed between them and their own officers, who returned without him, *re infecta—having done nothing.* Observe,

1. The reproof they gave the officers for not executing the warrant they gave them: *Why have you not brought him?* He appeared publicly; the people were many of them disgusted, and would have assisted them in taking him; this was *the last day of the feast*, and they would not have such another opportunity; "why then did you neglect your duty?" It vexed them that those who were their own creatures, who depended on them, and on whom they depended, into whose minds they had instilled prejudices against Christ, should thus disappoint them. Note, Mischievous men fret that they cannot do the mischief they would, Ps. cxii. 10; Neh. vi. 16.

2. The reason which the officers gave for the non-execution of their warrant: *Never man spoke like this man, v.* 46. Now, (1.) This was a very great truth, that *never any man spoke with* that wisdom, and power, and grace, that convincing clearness, and that charming sweetness, wherewith Christ spoke; none of the prophets, no, not Moses himself. (2.) The very officers that were sent to take him were taken with him, and acknowledged this. Though they were probably men who had no quick sense of reason or eloquence, and certainly had no inclination to think well of Jesus, yet so much *self-evidence* was there in what Christ said that they could not but prefer him before all those that sat in Moses's seat. Thus Christ was preserved by the power God has upon the consciences even of bad men. (3.) They said this to their lords and masters, who could not endure to hear any thing that tended to the honour of Christ and yet could not avoid hearing this. Providence ordered it so that this should be said to them, that it might be a vexation in their sin and an aggravation of their sin. Their own officers, who could not be suspected to be biassed in favour of Christ, are witnesses against them. This testimony of theirs should have made them reflect upon themselves, with this thought, "Do we know what we are doing, when we are hating and persecuting one that speaks so admirably well?"

3. The Pharisees endeavour to secure their officers to their interest, and to beget in them prejudices against Christ, to whom they saw them begin to be well affected. They suggest two things:—

(1.) That if they embrace the gospel of Christ they will *deceive themselves* (*v.* 47): *Are you also deceived?* Christianity has, from its first rise, been represented to the world as a great cheat upon it, and they that embraced it as men *deceived*, then when they began to be *undeceived*. Those that looked for a Messiah in external pomp thought those deceived who believed in a Messiah that appeared in poverty and disgrace; but the event declares that none were ever more shamefully deceived, nor put a greater cheat upon themselves, than those who promised themselves worldly wealth and secular dominion with the Messiah. Observe what a *compliment* the Pharisees paid to these officers: "*Are you also deceived?* What! men of your sense, and thought, and figure; men that know better than to be imposed upon by every pretender and upstart teacher?" They endeavour to prejudice them against Christ by persuading them to think well of themselves.

(2.) That they will *disparage themselves*. Most men, even in their religion, are willing to be governed by the example of those of the *first rank;* these officers therefore, whose preferments, such as they were, gave them a *sense of honour*, are desired to consider,

[1.] That, if they become disciples of Christ, they go contrary to those who were persons of quality and reputation: "*Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?* You know they have not, and you ought to be bound up by their judgment, and to *believe* and *do* in religion according to the will of your superiors; will you be wiser than they?" Some of the rulers did embrace Christ (Matt. ix. 18; *ch.* iv. 53), and more believed in him, but wanted courage to confess him (*ch.* xii. 42); but, when the interest of Christ runs low in the world, it is common for its adversaries to represent it as lower than really it is. But it was too true that few, very few, of them did. Note, *First*, The cause of Christ has seldom had rulers and Pharisees on its side. It needs not secular supports, nor proposes secular advantages, and therefore neither courts nor is courted by the great men of this world. *Self-denial* and the *cross* are hard lessons to *rulers* and *Pharisees*. *Secondly*, This has confirmed many in their prejudices against Christ and his gospel, that the rulers and Pharisees have been no friends to them. Shall *secular* men pretend to be more concerned about *spiritual* things than spiritual men themselves, or to see further into religion than those who make its study their profession? If *rulers* and *Pharisees* do not believe in Christ, they that do believe in him will be the most singular, unfashionable, ungenteel people in the world, and quite out of the way of preferment; thus are people foolishly swayed by *external motives* in matters of *eternal moment*, are willing to be damned for fashion-sake, and to go to hell in compliment to the *rulers* and *Pharisees*.

[2.] That they will link themselves with the despicable vulgar sort of people (*v.* 43): *But this people, who know not the law, are cursed*, meaning especially those that were well-affected to the doctrine of Christ. Observe, *First*, How scornfully and disdainfully they speak of them: *This people*. It is not λαὸς, this *lay-people*, distinguished from them that were the clergy, but ὄχλος οὗτος, this *rabble-people*, this pitiful, scandalous, scoundrel people, whom they disdained to *set with the dogs of their flock*, though God had set them with the lambs of his. If they meant the *commonalty of the Jewish nation*, they were the seed of Abraham, and in covenant with God, and not to be spoken of with such contempt. The church's common interests are betrayed when any one part of it studies to render the other mean and despicable. If they meant the *followers of Christ*, though they were generally persons of small figure and fortune, yet by owning Christ they discovered such a sagacity, integrity, and interest in the favours of Heaven, as made them truly great and considerable. Note, As the wisdom of God has often chosen base things, and things which are despised, so the folly of men has commonly debased and despised those whom God has chosen. *Secondly*, How unjustly they reproach them as ignorant of the word of God: *They know not the law;* as

if none knew the law but those that knew it *from them*, and no scripture-knowledge were current but what came out of their mint; and as if none knew the law but such as were observant of their canons and traditions. Perhaps many of those whom they thus despised *knew the law*, and the prophets too, better than they did. Many a plain, honest, unlearned disciple of Christ, by meditation, experience, prayers, and especially obedience, attains to a more clear, sound, and useful knowledge of the word of God, than some great scholars with all their wit and learning. Thus David came to understand *more than the ancients* and *all his teachers*, Ps. cxix. 99, 100. If the common people did not *know the law*, yet the chief priests and Pharisees, of all men, should not have upbraided them with this; for whose fault was it but theirs, who should have *taught them better*, but, instead of that, *took away the key of knowledge?* Luke xi. 52. *Thirdly*, How magisterially they pronounce sentence upon them: they are *cursed*, hateful to God, and all wise men; ἐπικατάρατοι—*an execrable* people. It is well that their saying they were cursed did not make them so, for the *curse causeless shall not come*. It is a usurpation of God's prerogative, as well as great uncharitableness, to say of any particular persons, much more of any body of people, that they are reprobates. We are unable to *try*, and therefore unfit to *condemn*, and our rule is, *Bless, and curse not*. Some think they meant no more than that the people were *apt to be deceived* and *made fools of*; but they use this odious word, They are *cursed*, to express their own indignation, and to frighten their officers from having any thing to do with them; thus the language of hell, in our profane age, calls every thing that is displeasing *cursed*, and *damned*, and *confounded*. Now, for aught that appears, these officers had their convictions baffled and stifled by these suggestions, and they never enquire further after Christ; one word from a *ruler* or *Pharisee* will sway more with many than the true reason of things, and the great interests of their souls.

II. What passed between them and Nicodemus, a member of their own body, *v.* 50, &c. Observe,

1. The just and rational objection which Nicodemus made against their proceedings. Even in their corrupt and wicked sanhedrim God left not himself quite *without* witness against their enmity; nor was the vote against Christ carried *nemine contradicente—unanimously*. Observe,

(1.) Who it was that appeared against them; it was Nicodemus, *he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them*, *v.* 50. Observe, concerning him, [1.] That, though he had been with Jesus, and taken him for his teacher, yet he retained his place in the council, and his vote among them. Some impute this to his *weakness* and cowardice, and think it was his fault that he did not quit his place, but Christ had never said to him, *Follow me*, else he would have done as others that left all to follow him; therefore it seems rather to have been his *wisdom* not immediately to throw up his place, because there he might have opportunity of serving Christ and his interest, and stemming the tide of the Jewish rage, which perhaps he did more than we are aware of. He might there be as Hushai among Absalom's counsellors, instrumental to *turn their counsels into foolishness*. Though we must in no case deny our Master, yet we may wait for an opportunity of confessing him to the best advantage. God has his remnant among all sorts, and many times finds, or puts, or makes, some good in the worst places and societies. There was Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar's court, and Nehemiah in Artaxerxes's. [2.] That though at first he came to Jesus *by night*, for fear of being known, and still continued in his post; yet, when there was occasion, he boldly appeared in defence of Christ, and opposed the whole council that were set against him. Thus many believers who at first were timorous, and ready to *flee at the shaking of a leaf*, have at length, by divine grace, grown courageous, and able to *laugh at the shaking of a spear*. Let none justify the disguising of their faith by the example of Nicodemus, unless, like him, they be ready upon the first occasion openly to appear in the cause of Christ, though they stand alone in it; for so Nicodemus did here, and *ch.* xix. 39.

(2.) What he alleged against their proceedings (*v.* 51): *Doth our law judge any man before it hear him* (ἀκούσῃ παρ' αὐτοῦ—*hear from himself*) and *know what he doeth?* By no means, nor doth the law of any civilized nation allow it. Observe, [1.] He prudently argues from the principles of their own law, and an incontestable rule of justice, that no man is to be condemned *unheard*. Had he urged the excellency of Christ's doctrine or the evidence of his miracles, or repeated to them his divine discourse with him (*ch.* 3), it had been but to *cast pearls before swine*, who would *trample them under their feet*, and would *turn again and rend him*; therefore he waives them. [2.] Whereas they had reproached the people, especially the followers of Christ, as *ignorant of the law*, he here tacitly retorts the charge upon themselves, and shows how ignorant they were of some of the first principles of the law, so unfit were they to give law to others. [3.] The law is here said to *judge*, and *hear*, and *know*, when magistrates that govern and are governed by it *judge*, and *hear*, and *know*; for they are the *mouth of the law*, and whatsoever they bind and loose according to the law is justly said to be bound and loosed by the law. [4.] It is highly fit that none should come under the *sentence* of the law, till they have first by a fair trial undergone the *scrutiny* of it. Judges, when they receive the complaints of the accuser, must always reserve in their

minds room for the defence of the accused, for they have two ears, to remind them to hear both sides; this is said to be the manner of the Romans, Acts xxv. 18. The method of our law is *Oyer* and *Terminer*, first to *hear* and then to *determine*. [5.] Persons are to be judged, not by what is *said* of them, but by what they *do*. *Our law* will not ask what men's opinions are of them, or out-cries against them, but, What have they done? What *overt-acts* can they be convicted of? Sentence must be given, *secundum allegata et probata—according to what is alleged and proved.* Facts, and not faces, must be known in judgment; and the *scale* of justice must be used before the *sword* of justice.

Now we may suppose that the motion Nicodemus made in the house upon this was, That Jesus should be desired to come and give them an account of himself and his doctrine, and that they should favour him with an impartial and unprejudiced hearing; but, though none of them could gainsay his maxim, none of them would second his motion.

2. What was said to this objection. Here is no direct reply given to it; but, when they could not resist the force of his argument, they fell foul upon him, and what was to seek in *reason* they made up in railing and reproach. Note, It is a sign of a bad cause when men cannot bear to *hear reason*, and take it as an affront to be reminded of its maxims. Whoever are *against reason* give cause to suspect that *reason* is *against them.* See how they taunt him: *Art thou also of Galilee? v.* 52. Some think he was well enough served for continuing among those whom he knew to be enemies to Christ, and for his speaking no more on the behalf of Christ than what he might have said on behalf of the greatest criminal—that he should not be condemned unheard. Had he said, "As for this Jesus, I have heard him myself, and know he is a *teacher come from God*, and you in opposing him fight against God," as he ought to have said, he could not have been more abused than he was for this feeble effort of his tenderness for Christ. As to what they said to Nicodemus, we may observe,

(1.) How *false* the grounds of their arguing were, for, [1.] They suppose that Christ was of Galilee, and this was false, and if they would have been at the pains of an impartial enquiry they would have found it so. [2.] They suppose that because most of his disciples were Galileans they were all such, whereas he had abundance of disciples in Judea. [3.] They suppose that out of Galilee no prophet had *risen*, and for this appeal to Nicodemus's search; yet this was false too: Jonah was of Gath-hepher, Nahum an Elkoshite, both of Galilee. Thus do they *makes lies their refuge.*

(2.) How *absurd* their arguings were upon these grounds, such as were a shame to *rulers* and *Pharisees.* [1.] Is any man of worth and virtue ever the worse for the poverty and obscurity of his country? The Galileans were the seed of Abraham; barbarians and Scythians are the seed of Adam; and *have we not all one Father?* [2.] Supposing no prophet had risen out of Galilee, yet it is not impossible that any should arise thence. If Elijah was the first prophet of Gilead (as perhaps he was), and if the Gileadites were called *fugitives*, must it therefore be questioned whether he was a prophet or no?

3. The hasty adjournment of the court hereupon. They broke up the assembly in confusion, and with precipitation, and *every man went to his own house.* They met to take *counsel together against the Lord and his Anointed*, but they *imagined a vain thing;* and not only he that sits in heaven laughed at them, but we may sit on earth and laugh at them too, to see all the policy of the close cabal broken to pieces with one plain honest word. They were not willing to hear Nicodemus, because they could not answer him. As soon as they perceived they had one such among them, they saw it was to no purpose to go on with their design, and therefore put off the debate to a more convenient season, when he was absent. Thus the counsel of the Lord is made to stand, in spite of the devices in the hearts of men.

CHAP. VIII.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's evading the snare which the Jews laid for him, in bringing to him a woman taken in adultery, ver. 1—11. II. Divers discourses or conferences of his with the Jews that cavilled at him, and sought occasion against him, and made every thing he said a matter of controversy. 1. Concerning his being the light of the world, ver. 12—20. 2. Concerning the ruin of the unbelieving Jews, ver. 21—30. 3. Concerning liberty and bondage, ver. 31—37. 4. Concerning his Father and their father, ver. 38—47. 5. Here is his discourse in answer to their blasphemous reproaches, ver. 48—50. 6. Concerning the immortality of believers, ver. 51—59. And in all this he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself.

JESUS went unto the mount of Olives. 2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. 3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not.* 7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him

first cast a stone at her. 8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9 And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Though Christ was basely abused in the foregoing chapter, both by the rulers and by the people, yet here we have him still at Jerusalem, still in the temple. *How often would he have gathered them!* Observe,

I. His retirement in the evening out of the town (*v.* 1): *He went unto the mount of olives;* whether to some friend's house, or to some booth pitched there, now at the feast of tabernacles, is not certain; whether he rested there, or, as some think, continued all night in prayer to God, we are not told. But he went out of Jerusalem, perhaps because he had no friend there that had either kindness or courage enough to give him a night's lodging; while his persecutors had *houses* of their own to go to (*ch.* vii. 53), he could not so much as borrow a place to lay his head on, but what he must go a mile or two out of town for. He retired (as some think) because he would not expose himself to the peril of a popular tumult in the night. It is prudent to go out of the way of danger whenever we can do it without going out of the way of duty. In the day-time, when he had work to do in the temple, he willingly exposed himself, and was under special protection, Isa. xlix. 2. But in the night, when he had not work to do, he withdrew into the country, and sheltered himself there.

II. His return in the morning to the temple, and to his work there, *v.* 2. Observe,

1. What a diligent preacher Christ was: *Early in the morning he came again, and taught.* Though he had been teaching the day before, he taught again to-day. Christ was a constant preacher, in season and out of season. Three things were taken notice of here concerning Christ's preaching. (1.) The time: *Early in the morning.* Though he lodged out of town, and perhaps had spent much of the night in secret prayer, yet he came *early.* When a day's work is to be done for God and souls it is good to begin betimes, and take the day before us. (2.) The place: *In the temple;* not so much because it was a *consecrated* place (for then he would have chosen it at other times) as because it was now a *place of concourse;* and he would hereby countenance solemn assemblies for religious worship, and encourage people to come up to the temple, for he had not yet left it desolate. (3.) His posture: *He sat down,* and taught, as one having authority, and as one that intended to abide by it for some time.

2. How diligently his preaching was attended upon: *All the people came unto him;* and perhaps many of them were the country-people, who were this day to return home from the feast, and were desirous to hear one sermon more from the mouth of Christ before they returned. They came to him, though he came early. They that *seek him early shall find him.* Though the rulers were displeased at those that came to hear him, yet they would come; and *he taught them,* though they were angry at *him* too. Though there were few or none among them that were persons of any figure, yet Christ bade them welcome, and taught them.

III. His dealing with those that brought to him the *woman taken in adultery, tempting* him. The scribes and Pharisees would not only not hear Christ patiently themselves, but they disturbed him when the people were attending on him. Observe here,

1. The case proposed to him by the scribes and Pharisees, who herein contrived to pick a quarrel with him, and bring him into a snare, *v.* 3—6.

(1.) They set the prisoner to the bar (*v.* 3): they brought him *a woman taken in adultery,* perhaps now lately taken, during the time of the feast of tabernacles, when, it may be, their dwelling in booths, and their feasting and joy, might, by wicked minds, which corrupt the best things, be made occasions of sin. Those that were *taken in adultery* were by the Jewish law to be put to death, which the Roman powers allowed them the execution of, and therefore she was brought before the ecclesiastical court. Observe, She *was taken in her adultery.* Though adultery is a work of darkness, which the criminals commonly take all the care they can to conceal, yet sometimes it is strangely brought to light. Those that promise themselves secrecy in sin deceive themselves. The scribes and Pharisees bring her to Christ, and set her in the midst of the assembly, as if they would leave her wholly to the judgment of Christ, he having *sat down,* as a judge upon the bench.

(2.) They prefer an indictment against her: *Master, this woman was taken in adultery, v.* 4. Here they call him *Master* whom but the day before they had called a *deceiver,* in hopes with their flatteries to have ensnared him, as those, Luke xx. 20. But, though men may be imposed upon with compliments, he that searches the heart cannot.

[1.] The crime for which the prisoner stands indicted is no less than adultery,

which even in the patriarchal age, before the law of Moses, was looked upon as *an iniquity to be punished by the judges*, Job xxxi. 9—11; Gen. xxxviii. 24. The Pharisees, by their vigorous prosecution of this offender, seemed to have a great zeal against the sin, when it appeared afterwards that they themselves were not free from it; nay, they were within *full of all uncleanness*, Matt. xxiii. 27, 28. Note, It is common for those that are indulgent to their own sin to be severe against the sins of others.

[2.] The proof of the crime was from the notorious evidence of the fact, an incontestable proof; she was *taken in the act*, so that there was no room left to plead not guilty. Had she not been taken in this act, she might have gone on to another, till her heart had been perfectly hardened; but sometimes it proves a mercy to sinners to have their sin brought to light, that they may *do no more presumptuously*. Better our sin should *shame* us than *damn* us, and be set in order before us for our conviction than for our condemnation.

(3.) They produce the statute in this case made and provided, and upon which she was indicted, *v.* 5. Moses in the law commanded *that such should be stoned.* Moses commanded that they should be *put to death* (Lev. xx. 10; Deut. xxii. 22), but not that they should be stoned, unless the adulteress was espoused, not married, or was a priest's daughter, Deut. xxii. 21. Note, Adultery is an exceedingly sinful sin, for it is the rebellion of a vile lust, not only against the command, but against the covenant, of our God. It is the violation of a divine institution in innocency, by the indulgence of one of the basest lusts of man in his degeneracy.

(4.) They pray his judgment in the case: "*But what sayest thou*, who pretendest to be a teacher come from God to repeal old laws and enact new ones? What hast thou to say in this case?" If they had asked this question in sincerity, with a humble desire to know his mind, it had been very commendable. Those that are entrusted with the administration of justice should look up to Christ for direction; but *this they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him, v.* 6. [1.] If he should confirm the sentence of the law, and let it take its course, they would censure him as inconsistent with himself (he having received publicans and harlots) and with the character of the Messiah, who should be meek, and have salvation, and proclaim a year of release; and perhaps they would accuse him to the Roman governor, for countenancing the Jews in the exercise of a judicial power. But, [2.] If he should acquit her, and give his opinion that the sentence should not be executed (as they expected he would), they would represent him, *First*, As an enemy to the law of Moses, and as one that usurped an authority to correct and control it, and would confirm that prejudice against him which his enemies were so industrious to propagate, that he came to *destroy the law and the prophets. Secondly*, As a friend to sinners, and, consequently, a favourer of sin; if he should seem to connive at such wickedness, and let it go unpunished, they would represent him as countenancing it, and being a patron of offences, if he was a protector of offenders, than which no reflection could be more invidious upon one that professed the strictness, purity, and business of a prophet.

2. The method he took to resolve this case, and so to break this snare.

(1.) He seemed to slight it, and turned a deaf ear to it: He *stooped down, and wrote on the ground.* It is impossible to tell, and therefore needless to ask, what he wrote; but this is the only mention made in the gospels of Christ's writing. Eusebius indeed speaks of his writing to Abgarus, king of Edessa. Some think they have a liberty of conjecture as to what he wrote here. Grotius says, It was some grave weighty saying, and that it was usual for wise men, when they were very thoughtful concerning any thing, to do so. Jerome and Ambrose suppose he wrote, *Let the names of these wicked men be written in the dust.* Others this, *The earth accuses the earth, but the judgment is mine.* Christ by this teaches us to be slow to speak when difficult cases are proposed to us, not quickly to shoot our bolt; and when provocations are given us, or we are bantered, to pause and consider before we reply; think twice before we speak once: *The heart of the wise studies to answer.* Our translation from some Greek copies, which add, μὴ προσποιούμενος (though most copies have it not), give this account of the reason of his writing on the ground, *as though he heard them not.* He did as it were look another way, to show that he was not willing to take notice of their address, saying, in effect, *Who made me a judge or a divider?* It is safe in many cases to be deaf to that which it is not safe to answer, Ps. xxxviii. 13. Christ would not have his ministers to be entangled in secular affairs. Let them rather employ themselves in any lawful studies, and fill up their time in writing on the ground (which nobody will heed), than busy themselves in that which does not belong to them. But, when Christ seemed as though he heard them not, he made it appear that he not only heard their words, but knew their thoughts.

(2.) When they importunately, or rather impertinently, pressed him for an answer, he turned the conviction of the prisoner upon the prosecutors, *v.* 7.

[1.] They *continued asking him*, and his seeming not to take notice of them made them the more vehement; for now they thought sure enough that they had run him aground, and that he could not avoid the imputation of contradicting either the law of

Moses, if he should acquit the prisoner, or his own doctrine of mercy and pardon, if he should condemn her; and therefore they pushed on their appeal to him with vigour; whereas they should have construed his disregard of them as a check to their design, and an intimation to them to desist, as they tendered their own reputation.

[2.] At last he put them all to shame and silence with one word: *He lifted up himself,* awaking as one out of sleep (Ps. lxxviii. 65), and *said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*

First, Here Christ avoided the snare which they had laid for him, and effectually saved his own reputation. He neither reflected upon the law nor excused the prisoner's guilt, nor did he on the other hand encourage the prosecution or countenance their heat; see the good effect of consideration. When we cannot make our point by steering a direct course, it is good to fetch a compass.

Secondly, In the net which they spread is their own foot taken. They came with design to accuse him, but they were forced to accuse themselves. Christ owns it was fit the prisoner should be prosecuted, but appeals to their consciences whether they were fit to be the prosecutors.

a. He here refers to that rule which the law of Moses prescribed in the execution of criminals, that the *hand of the witnesses must be first upon them* (Deut. xvii. 7), as in the stoning of Stephen, Acts vii. 58. The scribes and Pharisees were the witnesses against this woman. Now Christ puts it to them whether, according to their own law, they would dare to be the executioners. Durst they take away that life with their hands which they were now taking away with their tongues? would not their own consciences fly in their faces if they did?

b. He builds upon an uncontested maxim in morality, that it is very absurd for men to be zealous in punishing the offences of others, while they are every whit as guilty themselves, and they are not better than self-condemned who judge others, and yet themselves do the same thing: "If there be any of you who is *without sin,* without sin of this nature, that has not some time or other been guilty of fornication or adultery, let him cast the first stone at her." Not that magistrates, who are conscious of guilt themselves, should therefore connive at others' guilt. But therefore, (*a.*) Whenever we find fault with others, we ought to reflect upon ourselves, and to be more severe against sin in ourselves than in others. (*b.*) We ought to be favourable, though not to the sins, yet to the persons, of those that offend, and to restore them with a *spirit of meekness,* considering ourselves and our own corrupt nature. *Aut sumus, aut fuimus, vel possumus esse quod hic est—We either are, or have been, or may be, what he is.* Let this restrain us from *throwing stones* at our brethren, and proclaiming their faults. *Let him that is without sin* begin such discourse as this, and then those that are truly humbled for their own sins will blush at it, and be glad to *let it drop.* (*c.*) Those that are any way obliged to animadvert upon the faults of others are concerned to look well to themselves, and keep themselves pure (Matt. vii. 5), *Qui alterum incusat probri, ipsum se intueri oportet.* The snuffers of the tabernacle were of *pure gold.*

c. Perhaps he refers to the trial of the suspected wife by the jealous husband with the waters of jealousy. The man was to bring her to the priest (Num. v. 15), as the scribes and Pharisees brought this woman to Christ. Now it was a received opinion among the Jews, and confirmed by experience, that if the husband who brought his wife to that trial had himself been at any time guilty of adultery, *Aquæ non explorant ejus uxorem—The bitter water had no effect upon the wife.* "Come then," saith Christ, "according to your own tradition will I judge you; if you are without sin, stand to the charge, and let the adulteress be executed; but if not, though she be guilty, while you that present her are equally so, according to your own rule she shall be free."

d. In this he attended to the great work which he came into the world about, and that was to bring sinners to repentance; not to destroy, but to save. He aimed to bring, not only the prisoner to repentance, by showing her his mercy, but the prosecutors too, by showing them their sins. They sought to ensnare him; he sought to convince and convert them. Thus *the blood-thirsty hate the upright, but the just seek his soul.*

[3.] Having given them this startling word, he left them to consider of it, *and again stooped down, and wrote on the ground,* v. 8. As when they made their address he seemed to slight their question, so now that he had given them an answer he slighted their resentment of it, not caring what they said to it; nay, they needed not to make any reply; the matter was lodged in their own breasts, let them make the best of it there. Or, he would not seem to wait for an answer, lest they should on a sudden justify themselves, and then think themselves bound in honour to persist in it; but gives them time to pause, and to commune with their own hearts. God saith, *I hearkened and heard,* Jer. viii. 6. Some Greek copies here read, He *wrote on the ground,* ἑνὸς ἑκάστου αὐτῶν τὰς αμαρτίας—*the sins of every one of them;* this he could do, for he *sets our iniquities before him;* and this he will do, for he will *set them in order* before us too; he *seals up our transgressions,* Job xiv. 17. But he does not write men's sins *in the sand;* no, they are written as with a *pen of iron* and the *point of a diamond* (Jer. xvii. 1), never to be forgotten till they are forgiven.

[4.] The scribes and Pharisees were so strangely thunderstruck with the words of

Christ that they let fall their persecution of Christ, whom they durst no further tempt, and their prosecution of the woman, whom they durst no longer accuse (*v.* 9): *They went out one by one.*

First, Perhaps his writing on the ground frightened them, as the hand-writing on the wall frightened Belshazzar. They concluded he was writing bitter things against them, writing their doom. Happy they who have no reason to be afraid of Christ's writing!

Secondly, What he said frightened them by sending them to their own consciences; he had *shown them to themselves,* and they were afraid if they should stay till he lifted up himself again his next word would show them to the world, and shame them before men, and therefore they thought it best to withdraw. They went out *one by one,* that they might go out *softly,* and not by a noisy flight disturb Christ; they went away by *stealth,* as *people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle,* 2 Sam. xix. 3. The order of their departure is taken notice of, *beginning at the eldest,* either because they were most guilty, or first aware of the danger they were in of being put to the blush; and if the eldest quit the field, and retreat ingloriously, no marvel if the younger follow them. Now see here, 1. The *force* of the word of Christ for the conviction of sinners: *They who heard it were convicted by their own consciences.* Conscience is God's deputy in the soul, and one word from him will set it on work, Heb. iv. 12. Those that had been old in adulteries, and long fixed in a proud opinion of themselves, were here, even the oldest of them, startled by the word of Christ; even scribes and Pharisees, who were most conceited of themselves, are by the power of Christ's word made to retire with shame. 2. The *folly* of sinners under these convictions, which appears in these scribes and Pharisees. (1.) It is folly for those that are under convictions to make it their principal care to *avoid shame,* as Judah (Gen. xxxviii. 23), *lest we be shamed.* Our care should be more to save our souls than to save our credit. Saul evidenced his hypocrisy when he said, *I have sinned, yet now honour me, I pray thee.* There is no way to get the honour and comfort of penitents, but by taking the shame of penitents. (2.) It is folly for those that are under convictions to contrive how to *shift off* their convictions, and to get rid of them. The scribes and Pharisees had the wound *opened,* and now they should have been desirous to have it *searched,* and then it might have been *healed,* but this was the thing they *dreaded* and *declined.* (3.) It is folly for those that are under convictions to *get away from Jesus Christ,* as these here did, for he is the only one that can heal the wounds of conscience, and speak peace to us. Those that are convicted by their consciences will be condemned by their Judge, if they be not justified by their Redeemer; and will they then go from him? To whom will they go?

[5.] When the *self-conceited* prosecutors quitted the field, and *fled for the same,* the *self-condemned* prisoner stood her ground, with a resolution to abide by the judgment of our Lord Jesus: *Jesus was left alone* from the company of the scribes and Pharisees, free from their molestations, *and the woman standing in the midst* of the assembly that were attending on Christ's preaching, where they set her, *v.* 3. She did not seek to make her escape, though she had opportunity for it; but her prosecutors had appealed unto Jesus, and to him she would go, on him she would wait for her doom. Note, Those whose cause is brought before our Lord Jesus will never have occasion to remove it into any other court, for he is the refuge of penitents. The law which accuses us, and calls for judgment against us, is by the gospel of Christ made to withdraw; its demands are answered, and its clamours silenced, by the blood of Jesus. Our cause is lodged in the gospel court; we are *left with Jesus alone,* it is with him only that we have now to deal, for to him all judgment is committed; let us therefore secure our interest in him, and we are made for ever. Let his gospel *rule us,* and it will infallibly *save us.*

[6.] Here is the conclusion of the trial, and the issue it was brought to: *Jesus lifted up himself, and he saw none but the woman, v.* 10, 11. Though Christ may seem to take no notice of what is said and done, but leave it to the *contending* sons of men to *deal it out among themselves,* yet, when the hour of his judgment is come, he will no longer keep silence. When David had appealed to God, he prayed, *Lift up thyself,* Ps. vii. 6, and xciv. 2. The woman, it is likely, stood trembling at the bar, as one doubtful of the issue. Christ was *without sin,* and might cast the first stone; but though none more severe than he against sin, for he is infinitely just and holy, none more compassionate than he to sinners, for he is infinitely gracious and merciful, and this poor malefactor finds him so, now that she *stands upon her deliverance.* Here is the method of courts of judicature observed.

First, The prosecutors are called: *Where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?* Not but that Christ knew where they were; but he asked, that he might shame them, who declined his judgment, and encourage her who resolved to abide by it. St. Paul's challenge is like this, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Where are those their accusers? The *accuser of the brethren shall* be fairly *cast out,* and all indictments legally and regularly quashed.

Secondly, They do not appear when the question is asked: *Hath no man condemned thee?* She said, *No man, Lord.* She speaks respectfully to Christ, calls him *Lord,* but

is silent concerning her prosecutors, says nothing in answer to that question which concerned them, *Where are those thine accusers?* She does not triumph in their retreat nor insult over them as witnesses against themselves, not against her. If we hope to be forgiven by our Judge, we must forgive our accusers; and if their accusations, how invidious soever, were the happy occasion of awakening our consciences, we may easily *forgive them this wrong.* But she answered the question which concerned herself, *Has no man condemned thee?* True penitents find it enough to give an account of themselves to God, and will not undertake to give an account of other people.

Thirdly, The prisoner is therefore discharged: *Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.* Consider this,

(*a.*) As her discharge from the temporal punishment: "If they do not condemn thee to be *stoned to death,* neither *do I.*" Not that Christ came to disarm the magistrate of his sword of justice, nor that it is his will that capital punishments should not be inflicted on malefactors; so far from this, the administration of public justice is established by the gospel, and made subservient to Christ's kingdom: *By me kings reign.* But Christ would not condemn this woman, (*a.*) Because it was *none of his business;* he was no judge nor divider, and therefore would not intermeddle in secular affairs. His *kingdom* was *not of this world. Tractent fabrilia fabri —Let every one act in his own province.* (*b.*) Because she was prosecuted by those that were more guilty than she and could not for shame insist upon their demand of justice against her. The law appointed the hands of the witnesses to be first upon the criminal, and afterwards the hands of all the people, so that if they fly off, and do not condemn her, the prosecution drops. The justice of God, in inflicting temporal judgments, sometimes takes notice of a *comparative righteousness,* and spares those who are otherwise obnoxious when the punishing of them would gratify those that are worse than they, Deut. xxxii. 26, 27. But, when Christ dismissed her, it was with this caution, *Go, and sin no more.* Impunity emboldens malefactors, and therefore those who are guilty, and yet have found means to escape the edge of the law, need to double their watch, *lest Satan get advantage;* for the fairer the escape was, the fairer the warning was to go and sin no more. Those who help to save the life of a criminal should, as Christ here, help to save the soul with this caution.

b. As her discharge from the eternal punishment. For Christ to say, *I do not condemn thee* is, in effect, to say, *I do forgive thee;* and the *Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins,* and could upon good grounds give this absolution; for as he knew the hardness and impenitent hearts of the prosecutors, and therefore said that which would confound them, so he knew the tenderness and sincere repentance of the prisoner, and therefore said that which would comfort her, as he did to that woman who was a sinner, such a sinner as this, who was likewise looked upon with disdain by a Pharisee (Luke vii. 48, 50): *Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace.* So here, *Neither do I condemn thee.* Note, (*a.*) Those are truly happy whom Christ *doth not condemn,* for his discharge is a sufficient answer to all other challenges; they are all *coram non judice—before an unauthorized judge.* (*b.*) Christ will not condemn those who, though they have sinned, will *go and sin no more,* Ps. lxxxv. 8; Isa. lv. 7. He will not take the advantage he has against us for our former rebellions, if we will but lay down our arms and return to our allegiance. (*c.*) Christ's favour to us in the remission of the sins that are past should be a prevailing argument with us to *go and sin no more,* Rom. vi. 1, 2. Will not Christ condemn thee? Go then and sin no more.

12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. 13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. 14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, *yet* my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. 15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18 I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. 19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. 20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

The rest of the chapter is taken up with debates between Christ and contradicting sinners, who cavilled at the most gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. It is not certain whether these disputes were the same day that the adulteress was discharged; it is probable they were, for the

evangelist mentions no other day, and takes notice (*v.* 2) how early Christ began that day's work. Though those Pharisees that accused the woman had absconded, yet there were other Pharisees (*v.* 13) to confront Christ, who had brass enough in their foreheads to keep them in countenance, though some of their party were put to such a shameful retreat; nay perhaps that made them the more industrious to pick quarrels with him, to retrieve, if possible, the reputation of their baffled party. In these verses we have,

I. A great doctrine laid down, with the application of it.

1. The doctrine is, *That Christ is the light of the world* (*v.* 12): *Then spoke Jesus again unto them;* though he had spoken a great deal to them to little purpose, and what he had said was opposed, yet he *spoke again,* for he *speaketh once, yea, twice.* They had turned a deaf ear to what he said, and yet he *spoke again to them,* saying, *I am the light of the world.* Note, Jesus Christ is the light of the world. One of the rabbies saith, *Light* is the name of the Messiah, as it is written, Dan. ii. 22, *And light dwelleth with him.* God is light, and Christ is *the image of the invisible God;* God of gods, Light of lights. He was expected to be a *light to enlighten the Gentiles* (Luke ii. 32), and so the *light of the world,* and not of the Jewish church only. The visible light of the world is the sun, and Christ is the *Sun of righteousness.* One sun enlightens the whole world, so does one Christ, and there needs no more. Christ in calling himself the light expresses, (1.) What he is in himself—most excellent and glorious. (2.) What he is to the world—the fountain of light, enlightening every man. What a dungeon would the world be without the sun! So would it be without Christ by whom *light came into the world, ch.* iii. 19.

2. The inference from this doctrine is, *He that followeth me,* as a traveller follows the light in a dark night, *shall not walk in darkness,* but *shall have the light of life.* If Christ be the light, then, (1.) It is our duty to *follow him,* to submit ourselves to his guidance, and in every thing take directions from him, in the way that leads to happiness. Many follow *false lights—ignes fatui,* that lead them to destruction; but Christ is the *true light.* It is not enough to *look at* this light, and to *gaze* upon it, but we must follow it, believe in it, and walk in it, for it is a light to *our feet,* not *our eyes* only. (2.) It is the happiness of those who follow Christ that they *shall not walk in darkness.* They shall not be left destitute of those instructions in the way of truth which are necessary to keep them from destroying error, and those directions in the way of duty which are necessary to keep them from damning sin. They shall have the *light of life,* that knowledge and enjoyment of God which will be to them the light of spiritual life in this world and of everlasting life in the other world, where there will be no death nor darkness. Follow Christ, and we shall undoubtedly be happy in both worlds. Follow Christ, and we shall follow him to heaven.

II. The objection which the Pharisees made against this doctrine, and it was very trifling and frivolous: *Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true,* *v.* 13. In this objection they went upon the suspicion which we commonly have of men's self-commendation, which is concluded to be the native language of self-love, such as we are all ready to condemn in others, but few are willing to own in themselves. But in this case the objection was very unjust, for, 1. They made that his crime, and a diminution to the credibility of his doctrine, which in the case of one who introduced a divine revelation was necessary and unavoidable. Did not Moses and all the prophets bear witness of themselves when they avouched themselves to be God's messengers? Did not the Pharisees ask John Baptist, *What sayest thou of thyself?* 2. They overlooked the testimony of all the other witnesses, which corroborated the testimony he bore of himself. Had he only borne record of himself, his testimony had indeed been *suspicious,* and the belief of it might have been *suspended;* but his doctrine was attested by more than *two or three* credible *witnesses,* enough to *establish every word* of it.

III. Christ's reply to this objection, *v.* 14. He does not retort upon them as he might ("You profess yourselves to be devout and good men, but your witness is not *true*"), but plainly vindicates himself; and, though he had waived his own testimony (*ch.* v. 31), yet here he abides by it, that it did not derogate from the credibility of his other proofs, but was necessary to show the force of them. He is the light of the world, and it is the property of light to be self-evidencing. First principles prove themselves. He urges three things to prove that his testimony, though of himself, was true and cogent.

1. That he was conscious to himself of his own authority, and abundantly satisfied in himself concerning it. He did not speak as one at uncertainty, nor propose a disputable notion, about which he himself hesitated, but *declared a decree,* and gave such an account of himself as he would *abide by: I know whence I came, and whither I go.* He was fully apprised of his own undertaking from first to last; knew whose errand he went upon, and what his success would be. He knew what he *was* before his manifestation to the world, and what he *should be* after; that he came *from the Father,* and was going *to him* (*ch.* xvi. 28), came *from glory,* and was going *to glory, ch.* xvii. 5. This is the satisfaction of all good Christians, that though the world know them not, as it knew him not, yet they know whence their spiritual life comes, and whither it tends, and go upon sure grounds.

2. That they are very incompetent judges of him, and of his doctrine, and not to be regarded. (1.) Because they were *ignorant*, willingly and resolvedly *ignorant: You cannot tell whence I came, and whither I go.* To what purpose is it to talk with those who know nothing of the matter, nor desire to know? He had told them of his coming from heaven and returning to heaven, but it was *foolishness to them*, they *received it not;* it was what the *brutish man knows not*, Ps. xcii. 6. They took upon them to judge of that which they did not understand, which lay quite out of the road of their acquaintance. Those that despise Christ's dominions and dignities speak evil of what they *know not*, Jude, *v.* 8, 10. (2.) Because they were *partial* (*v.* 15): *You judge after the flesh.* When fleshly wisdom gives the rule of judgment, and outward appearances only are given in evidence, and the case decided according to them, then men *judge after the flesh;* and when the consideration of a secular interest turns the scale in judging of spiritual matters, when we judge in favour of that which pleases the carnal mind, and recommends us to a carnal world, we judge after the flesh; and the judgment cannot be right when the rule is wrong. The Jews judged of Christ and his gospel by outward appearances, and, because he appeared so mean, thought it impossible he should be the light of the world; as if the sun under a cloud were no sun. (3.) Because they were *unjust* and *unfair* towards him, intimated in this: "*I judge no man;* I neither make nor meddle with your political affairs, nor does my doctrine or practice at all intrench upon, or interfere with, your civil rights or secular powers." He thus *judged no man.* Now, if he did not *war after the flesh*, it was very unreasonable for them to *judge him after the flesh*, and to treat him as an offender against the civil government. Or, "*I judge no man*," that is, "not now in my first coming, that is deferred till I come again," *ch.* iii. 17. *Prima dispensatio Christi medicinalis est, non judicialis—The first coming of Christ was for the purpose of administering, not justice, but medicine.*

3. That his testimony of himself was sufficiently supported and corroborated by the testimony of his Father *with him and for him* (*v.* 16): *And yet, if I judge, my judgment is true.* He did in his doctrine judge (*ch.* ix. 39), though not *politically.* Consider him then,

(1.) As a judge, and his own judgment was valid: "*If I judge*, I who have authority to execute judgments, I to whom all things are delivered, I who am the Son of God, and have the Spirit of God, if I judge, *my judgment is true*, of incontestable rectitude and uncontrollable authority, Rom. ii. 2. *If I should judge*, my judgment must be true, and then you would be condemned; but the judgment-day is not yet come, you are not yet to be condemned, but spared, and therefore now *I judge no man;*" so Chrysostom. Now that which makes his judgment unexceptionable is, [1.] His Father's concurrence with him: *I am not alone, but I and the Father.* He had the Father's concurring *counsels* to *direct;* as he was with the Father before the world in forming the counsels, so the Father was with him in the world in prosecuting and executing those counsels, and never left him *inops consilii—without advice*, Isa. xi. 2. All the *counsels of peace* (and of war too) *were between them both*, Zech. vi. 13. He had also the Father's concurring power to authorize and confirm what he did; see Ps. lxxxix. 21, &c. Isa. xlii. 1. He did not act *separately*, but in his own name and his Father's, and *by the authority aforesaid*, *ch.* v. 17, and xiv. 9, 10. [2.] His Father's commission to him: "It is the Father that *sent me.*" Note, God will go along with those that he sends; see Exod. iii. 10, 12: *Come, and I will send thee*, and *certainly I will be with thee.* Now, if Christ had a *commission* from the Father, and the Father's *presence* with him in all his administrations, no doubt his *judgment* was *true* and valid; no exception lay *against* it, no appeal lay *from* it.

(2.) Look upon him as *a witness*, and now he appeared no otherwise (having not as yet taken the throne of judgment), and as such his testimony was true and unexceptionable; this he shows, *v.* 17, 18, where,

[1.] He quotes a maxim of the Jewish law, *v.* 17. That *the testimony of two men is true.* Not as if it were always true *in itself*, for many a time hand has been joined in hand to bear a *false* testimony, 1 Kings xxi. 10. But it is allowed as sufficient evidence upon which to ground a verdict (*verum dictum*), and if nothing appear to the contrary it is taken for granted to be *true.* Reference is here had to that law (Deut. xvii. 6), *At the mouth of two witnesses shall he that is worthy of death be put to death.* And see Deut. ix. 15; Num. xxxv. 30. It was in *favour of life* that in capital cases two witnesses were required, as with us in case of treason. See Heb. vi. 18.

[2.] He applies this to the case in hand (*v.* 18): *I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bears witness of me.* Behold two witnesses! Though in human courts, where two witnesses are required, the criminal or candidate is not admitted to be a witness for himself; yet in a matter purely divine, which can be proved only by a divine testimony, and God himself must be the witness, if the formality of two or three witnesses be insisted on, there can be no other than the eternal Father, the eternal Son of the Father, and the eternal Spirit. Now if the testimony of two distinct persons, that are *men*, and therefore may deceive or be deceived, is conclusive, much more ought the testimony of the Son of God concerning himself, backed with the testimony of his Father concerning him, to command assent; see 1 John v. 7 9—11. Now this proves

not only that the Father and the Son are two distinct persons (for their respective testimonies are here spoken of as the testimonies of two several persons), but that these two are one, not only one in their testimony, but equal in power and glory, and therefore the same in substance. St. Austin here takes occasion to caution his hearers against Sabellianism on the one hand, which confounded the persons in the Godhead, and Arianism on the other, which denied the Godhead of the Son and Spirit. *Alius est filius, et alius pater, non tamen aliud, sed hoc ipsum est et pater, et filius, scilicet unus Deus est—The Son is one Person, and the Father is another; they do not, however, constitute two Beings, but the Father is the same Being that the Son is, that is, the only true God.* Tract. 36, *in* Joann. Christ here speaks of himself and the Father as witnesses to the world, giving in evidence to the reason and conscience of the children of men, whom he deals with as men. And these witnesses *to* the world now will in the great day be witnesses *against* those that persist in unbelief, and *their* word will judge men.

This was the sum of the first conference between Christ and these carnal Jews, in the conclusion of which we are told how their tongues were let loose, and their hands tied.

First, How their tongues were let loose (such was the malice of hell) to cavil at his discourse, *v.* 19. Though in what he said there appeared nothing of human policy or artifice, but a divine security, yet they set themselves to *cross questions* with him. None so incurably *blind* as those that resolve they *will not see.* Observe,

a. How they evaded the *conviction* with a *cavil: Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father?* They might easily have understood, by the tenour of this and his other discourses, that when he spoke of his *Father* he meant no other than God himself; yet they pretend to understand him of a common person, and, since he appeals to his testimony, they bid him *call his witness*, and challenge him, if he can, to produce him: *Where is thy Father?* Thus, as Christ said of them (*v.* 15), they *judge after the flesh.* Perhaps they hereby intend a reflection upon the meanness and obscurity of his family: *Where is thy Father*, that he should be fit to give evidence in such a case as this? Thus they turned it off with a taunt, when they *could not resist the wisdom and spirit with which he spoke.*

b. How he evaded the *cavil* with a further *conviction;* he did not tell them where his Father was, but charged them with wilful ignorance: "*You neither know me nor my Father.* It is to no purpose to discourse to you about divine things, who talk of them as blind men do of colours. Poor creatures! you know nothing of the matter." (*a.*) He charges them with ignorance of God: "*You know not my Father.* In Judah was God known (Ps. lxxvi. 1); they had some knowledge of him as the God that made the world, but their eyes were darkened that they could not see the light of his glory shining *in the face of Jesus Christ.* The *little children* of the Christian church *know the Father*, know him as a Father (1 John ii. 13); but these rulers of the Jews did not, because they would not so know him. (*b.*) He shows them the true cause of their ignorance of God: *If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.* The reason why men are ignorant of God is because they are unacquainted with Jesus Christ. Did we know Christ, [*a.*] In knowing him we should know the Father, of whose person he is the express image, *ch.* xiv. 9. Chrysostom proves hence the Godhead of Christ, and his equality with his Father. We cannot say, "He that knows a man knows an angel," or, "He that knows a creature knows the Creator;" but he that knows Christ knows the Father. [*b.*] By him we should be instructed in the knowledge of God, and introduced into an acquaintance with him. If we *knew Christ* better, we should *know the Father* better; but, where the Christian religion is slighted and opposed, natural religion will soon be lost and laid aside. Deism makes way for atheism. Those become vain in their imaginations concerning God that will not learn of Christ.

Secondly, See how their hands were tied, though their tongues were thus let loose; such was the power of Heaven to restrain the malice of hell. *These words spoke Jesus*, these bold words, these words of conviction and reproof, *in the treasury*, an apartment of the temple, where, to be sure, the chief priests, whose gain was their godliness, were mostly resident, attending the business of the revenue. Christ *taught in the temple*, sometimes in one part, sometimes in another, as he saw occasion. Now the priests who had so great a concern in the temple, and looked upon it as their *demesne*, might easily, with the assistance of the janizaries that were at their beck, either have seized him and exposed him to the rage of the mob, and that punishment which they called the *beating of the rebels;* or, at least, have *silenced* him, and stopped his mouth there, as Amos, though tolerated in the land of Judah, was forbidden to prophesy in the king's chapel, Amos, vii. 12, 13. Yet even *in the temple*, where they had him in their reach, *no man laid hands on him*, for *his hour was not yet come.* See here, 1. The restraint laid upon his persecutors by an invisible power; none of them durst meddle with him. God can set bounds to the wrath of men, as he does to the waves of the sea. Let us not therefore fear danger in the way of duty; for God hath Satan and all his instruments in a chain. 2. The reason of this restraint: *His hour was not yet come.* The frequent mention of this intimates how much the time of our departure out of the

world depends upon the fixed counsel and decree of God. It *will* come, it is coming; not yet come, but it is at hand. Our enemies cannot hasten it any sooner, nor our friends delay it any longer, than the time appointed of the Father, which is very comfortable to every good man, who can look up and say with pleasure, *My times are in thy hands;* and better there than in our own. His hour was not yet come, because his work was not done, nor his testimony finished. To all God's purposes *there is a time.*

21 Then said Jesus again unto them,
I go my way, and ye shall seek me,
and shall die in your sins: whither I
go, ye cannot come. 22 Then said
the Jews, Will he kill himself? be-
cause he saith, Whither I go, ye can-
not come. 23 And he said unto them,
Ye are from beneath; I am from
above: ye are of this world; I am
not of this world. 24 I said there-
fore unto you, that ye shall die in
your sins: for if ye believe not that I
am *he*, ye shall die in your sins. 25
Then said they unto him, Who art
thou? And Jesus saith unto them,
Even *the same* that I said unto you
from the beginning. 26 I have many
things to say and to judge of you:
but he that sent me is true; and I
speak to the world those things which
I have heard of him. 27 They un-
derstood not that he spake to them
of the Father. 28 Then said Jesus
unto them, When ye have lifted up
the Son of man, then shall ye know
that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing
of myself; but as my Father hath
taught me, I speak these things. 29
And he that sent me is with me: the
Father hath not left me alone; for I
do always those things that please
him. 30 As he spake these words,
many believed on him.

Christ here gives fair warning to the careless unbelieving Jews to consider what would be the consequence of their infidelity, that they might prevent it before it was too late; for he spoke words of terror as well as words of grace. Observe here,

I. The wrath threatened (*v.* 21): *Jesus said again unto them* that which might be likely to do them good. He continued to teach, in kindness to those few who received his doctrine, though there were many that resisted it, which is an example to ministers to go on with their work, notwithstanding opposition, because a remnant shall be saved. Here Christ changes his voice; he had *piped to them* in the offers of his grace, and they *had not danced;* now he mourns to them in the denunciations of his wrath, to try if they would lament. He said, *I go my way, and you shall seek me, and shall die in your sins. Whither I go you cannot come.* Every word is terrible, and bespeaks spiritual judgments, which are the sorest of all judgments; worse than war, pestilence, and captivity, which the Old-Testament prophets denounced. Four things are here threatened against the Jews.

1. Christ's departure from them: *I go my way,* that is, "It shall not be long before I go; you need not take so much pains to drive me from you, I shall go of myself." They said to him, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;* and he takes them at their word; but woe to those from whom Christ departs. Ichabod, the glory is gone, our defence is departed, when Christ goes. Christ frequently warned them of his departure before he left them: he *bade often farewell,* as one *loth to depart,* and willing to be invited, and that would have them *stir up themselves to take hold on him.*

2. Their enmity to the true Messiah, and their fruitless and infatuated enquiries after another Messiah when he was gone away, which were both their sin and their punishment: *You shall seek me,* which intimates either, (1.) Their *enmity* to the *true Christ:* "You shall seek to ruin my interest, by persecuting my doctrine and followers, with a fruitless design to root them out." This was a continual vexation and torment to themselves, made them incurably *ill-natured,* and brought *wrath upon them* (God's and their own) *to the uttermost.* Or, (2.) Their *enquiries* after *false Christs:* "You shall continue your expectations of the Messiah, and be the self-perplexing seekers of a Christ to come, when he is already come;" like the Sodomites, who, being struck with blindness, wearied themselves to find the door. See Rom. ix. 31, 32.

3. Their final impenitency: *You shall die in your sins.* Here is an error in all our English Bibles, even the old bishops' translation, and that of Geneva (the Rhemists only excepted), for all the Greek copies have it in the singular number, *ἐν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ὑμῶν—in your sin,* so all the Latin versions; and Calvin has a note upon the difference between this and *v.* 24, where it is plural, *ταις ἁμαρτίαις,* that here it is meant especially of the sin of unbelief, *in hoc peccato vestro—in this sin of yours.* Note, Those that live in unbelief are for ever undone if they die in unbelief. Or, it may be understood in general, *You shall die in your iniquity,* as Ezek. iii. 19, and xxxiii. 9. Many that have long lived in sin are, through grace, saved by a timely repentance from *dying in sin;* but for those who go out of this world of probation into that of retribution under the guilt of sin unpardoned, and the power

of sin unbroken, there remaineth no relief: salvation itself cannot save them, Job xx. 11; Ezek. xxxii. 27.

4. Their eternal separation from Christ and all happiness in him: *Whither I go you cannot come.* When Christ left the world, he went to a state of perfect happiness; he went to paradise. Thither he took the penitent thief with him, that did not die in his sins; but the impenitent not only *shall not* come to him, but they *cannot;* it is morally impossible, for heaven would not be heaven to those that die unsanctified and unmeet for it. You cannot come, because you have *no right* to enter into that Jerusalem, Rev. xxii. 14. *Whither I go you cannot come,* to fetch me thence, so Dr. Whitby; and the same is the comfort of all good Christians, that, when they get to heaven, they will be out of the reach of their enemies' malice.

II. The jest they made of this threatening. Instead of trembling at this word, they bantered it, and turned it into ridicule (*v.* 22): *Will he kill himself?* See here, 1. What slight thoughts they had of Christ's threatenings; they could make themselves and one another merry with them, as those that mocked the messengers of the Lord, and turned the *burden of the word of the Lord* into a *by-word,* and *precept upon precept, line upon line,* into a merry song, Isa. xxviii. 13. But *be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.* 2. What ill thoughts they had of Christ's meaning, as if he had an inhuman design upon his own life, to avoid the indignities done him, like Saul. This is indeed (say they) to go whither we cannot follow him, for we will never *kill ourselves.* Thus they make him not only such a one as themselves, but worse; yet in the calamities brought by the Romans upon the Jews many of them in discontent and despair did kill themselves. They had put a much more favourable construction upon this word of his (*ch.* vii. 34, 35): *Will he go to the dispersed among the Gentiles?* But see how indulged malice grows more and more malicious.

III. The confirmation of what he had said.

1. He had said, *Whither I go you cannot come,* and here he gives the reason for this (*v.* 23): *You are from beneath, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.* You are ἐκ τῶν κάτω—*of those things which are beneath;* noting, not so much their rise from beneath as their affection to these lower things: You are *in with these things,* as those that belong to them; how can you come where I go, when your spirit and disposition are so directly contrary to mine?" See here, (1.) What the *spirit of the Lord Jesus* was—not of *this world,* but from *above.* He was perfectly dead to the wealth of the world, the ease of the body, and the praise of men, and was wholly taken up with divine and heavenly things; and none shall be with him but those who are *born from above* and have their *conversation in heaven.* (2.) How contrary to this *their* spirit was: "*You are from beneath,* and of this world." The Pharisees were of a carnal worldly spirit; and what communion could Christ have with them?

2. He had said, *You shall die in your sins,* and here he stands to it: "Therefore I said, You shall die in your sins, because *you are from beneath;*" and he gives this further reason for it, *If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins,* *v.* 24. See here, (1.) What we are required to believe: *that I am he,* ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι—*that I am,* which is one of God's names, Exod. iii. 14. It was the Son of God that there said, *Ehejeh asher Ehejeh—I will be what I will be;* for the deliverance of Israel was but a figure of good things to come, but now he saith, "*I am he;*" he that should come, he that you expect the Messias to be, that you would have me to be to you. I am more than the bare name of the Messiah; I do not only call myself so, but I *am he.*" True faith does not *amuse* the soul with an empty sound of words, but *affects* it with the doctrine of Christ's mediation, as a real thing that has real effects. (2.) How necessary it is that we believe this. If we have not this faith, *we shall die in our sins;* for the matter is so settled that without this faith, [1.] We cannot be saved from the power of sin while we live, and therefore shall certainly continue in it to the last. Nothing but the *doctrine* of Christ's grace will be an argument powerful enough, and none but the *Spirit* of Christ's grace will be an agent powerful enough, to turn us from sin to God; and that Spirit is given, and that doctrine given, to be effectual to those only who believe in Christ: so that, if Satan be not by faith dispossessed, he has a lease of the soul for its life; if Christ do not cure us, our case is desperate, and we shall *die in our sins.* [2.] Without faith we cannot be saved from the punishment of sin when we die, for the *wrath of God remains* upon them that believe not, Mark xvi. 16. Unbelief is the damning sin; it is a sin against the remedy. Now this implies the great gospel promise: *If we believe that Christ is he,* and receive him accordingly, *we shall not die in our sins.* The law saith absolutely to all, as Christ said (*v.* 21), *You shall die in your sins,* for we are all guilty before God; but the gospel is a defeasance of the obligation upon condition of believing. The curse of the law is vacated and annulled to all that submit to the grace of the gospel. Believers die in Christ, in his love, in his arms, and so are saved from dying *in their sins.*

IV. Here is a further discourse concerning *himself,* occasioned by his requiring faith in himself as the condition of salvation, *v.* 25—29. Observe,

1. The question which the Jews put to him (*v.* 25): *Who art thou?* This they asked tauntingly, and not with any desire to be instructed. He had said, You must believe

that *I am he.* By his not saying expressly who he was, he plainly intimated that in his person he was such a one as could not be *described* by any, and in his office such a one as was *expected* by all that looked for redemption in Israel; yet this awful manner of speaking, which had so much significancy in it, they turned to his reproach, as if he knew not what to say of himself: "*Who art thou,* that we must with an implicit faith believe in thee, that thou art some mighty HE, we know not *who* or *what,* nor are *worthy to know?*"

2. His answer to this question, wherein he directs them three ways for information:—

(1.) He refers them to *what he had said* all along: "Do you ask who I am? *Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.*" The original here is a little intricate, *τὴν ἀρχὴν ὅ τι καὶ λαλῶ ὑμῖν,* which some read thus: *I am the beginning, which also I speak unto you.* So Austin takes it. Christ is called Αρχὴ —*the beginning* (Col. i. 18; Rev. 1. 8; xxi. 6; iii. 14), and so it agrees with *v.* 24, *I am he.* Compare Isa. xli. 4: *I am the first, I am he.* Those who object that it is the accusative case, and therefore not properly answering to *τίς εἶ,* must undertake to construe by grammar rules that parallel expression, Rev. 1. 8, *ὁ ἦν.* But most interpreters agree with our version, Do you ask *who I am?* [1.] I am *the same that I said to you from the beginning* of time in the scriptures of the Old-Testament, the same that from the beginning was said to be *the Seed of the woman, that should break the serpent's head,* the same that in all the ages of the church was the Mediator of the covenant, and the faith of the patriarchs. [2.] *From the beginning* of my public ministry. The account he had already given of himself he resolved to *abide by;* he had declared himself to be the *Son of God* (*ch.* v. 17), to be the Christ (*ch.* iv. 26), and the bread of life, and had proposed himself as the object of that faith which is necessary to salvation, and to this he refers them for an answer to their question. Christ is *one with himself;* what he had said from the beginning, he saith still. His is an *everlasting gospel.*

(2.) He refers them to his Father's judgment, and the instructions he had from him (*v.* 26): "*I have many things,* more than you think of, *to say, and* in them *to judge of you.* But why should I trouble myself any further with you? I know very well that *he who sent me is true,* and will stand by me, and bear me out, for *I speak to the world* (to which I am sent as an ambassador) *those things,* all those and those only, *which I have heard of him.*" Here,

[1.] He suppresses his accusation of them. He had *many things* to charge them with, and many evidences to produce against them; but for the present he had said enough. Note, Whatever discoveries of sin are made to us, he that searches the heart has still more to judge of us, 1 John iii. 20. How much soever God reckons with sinners in this world there is still a further reckoning yet behind, Deut. xxxii. 34. Let us learn hence not to be forward to say all we can say, even against the worst of men; we may have many things to say, by way of censure, which yet it is better to leave *unsaid,* for what is it to us?

[2.] He enters his appeal against them to his Father: *He that sent me.* Here two things comfort him:—*First,* That he had been *true to his Father,* and to the trust reposed in him: *I speak to the world* (for his gospel was to be preached to every creature) *those things which I have heard of him.* Being given for a *witness to the people* (Isa. lv. 4), he was *Amen,* a *faithful witness,* Rev. iii. 14. He did not *conceal* his doctrine, but spoke it *to the world* (being of common concern, it was to be of common notice); nor did he change or alter it, nor vary from the instructions he received from him that sent him. *Secondly,* That his Father would be *true to him;* true to the promise that he would *make his mouth like a sharp sword;* true to his purpose concerning him, which was a *decree* (Ps. ii. 7); true to the threatenings of his wrath against those that should reject him. Though he should not *accuse* them to his Father, yet the Father, who sent him, would undoubtedly reckon with them, and would be *true* to what he had said (Deut. xviii. 19), that whosoever would not hearken to that prophet whom God would raise up *he would require it of him.* Christ would not accuse them; "for," saith he, "he that sent me is true, and will pass judgment on them, though I should not demand judgment against them." Thus, when he *lets fall* the present prosecution, he *binds them over* to the judgment-day, when it will be too late to dispute what they will not now be persuaded to believe. *I, as a deaf man, heard not; for thou wilt hear,* Ps. xxxviii. 13, 15. Upon this part of our Saviour's discourse the evangelist has a melancholy remark (*v.* 27): *They understood not that he spoke to them of the Father.* See here, 1. The power of Satan to blind the minds of those who believe not. Though Christ spoke so plainly of God as his Father in heaven, yet they did not understand whom he meant, but thought he spoke of some father he had in Galilee. Thus the plainest things are riddles and parables to those who are resolved to hold fast their prejudices; day and night are alike to the blind. 2. The reason why the threatenings of the word make so little impression upon the minds of sinners; it is because they understand not whose the wrath is that is revealed in them. When Christ told them of the truth of him that sent him, as a warning to them to prepare for his judgment, which is *according to truth,* they slighted the warning, because they understood not to whose judgment it was that they made themselves obnoxious.

(3.) He refers them to *their own convictions*

hereafter, *v.* 28, 29. He finds they will not understand him, and therefore adjourns the trial till further evidence should come in; they that *will not see shall see,* Isa. xxvi. 11. Now observe here,

[1.] *What* they should ere long be *convinced of:* "*You shall know that I am he,* that Jesus is the true Messiah. Whether you will own it or no before men, you shall be made to know it in your own consciences, the convictions of which, though you may *stifle,* yet you cannot *baffle: that I am he,* not that you represent me to be, but he that I preach myself to be, he that should come!" Two things they should be convinced of, in order to this:—*First,* That he did nothing *of himself,* not of himself as man, of himself alone, of himself without the Father, with whom he was *one.* He does not hereby derogate from his own inherent power, but only denies their charge against him as a *false prophet;* for of false prophets it is said that they prophesied *out of their own hearts,* and followed *their own spirits. Secondly,* That as *his Father taught him* so he *spoke these things,* that he was not αὐτοδίδακτος—*selftaught,* but Θεοδίδακτος—*taught of God.* The doctrine he preached was the counterpart of the counsels of God, with which he was intimately acquainted; καθὼς ἐδίδαξε, ταῦτα λαλῶ—I speak those things, not only *which* he taught me, but *as* he taught me, with the same divine power and authority.

[2.] *When* they should be convinced of this: *When you have lifted up the Son of man,* lifted him up upon the cross, as the brazen serpent upon the pole (*ch.* iii. 14), as the sacrifices under the law (for Christ is the great sacrifice), which, when they were offered, were said to be *elevated,* or *lifted up;* hence the burnt-offerings, the most ancient and honourable of all, were called *elevations (Gnoloth* from *Gnolah, ascendit—he ascended),* and in many other offerings they used the significant ceremony of *heaving* the sacrifice up, and *moving* it before the Lord; thus was Christ *lifted up,* Or the expression denotes that his death was his exaltation. They that put him to death thought thereby for ever to have *sunk* him and his interest, but it proved to be the advancement of both, *ch.* xii. 24. When the Son of man was *crucified,* the Son of man was *glorified.* Christ had called his dying his *going away;* here he calls it his being lifted *up;* thus the death of the saints, as it is their departure out of this world, so it is their advancement to a better. Observe, He speaks of those he is now talking with as the *instruments* of his death: when *you have lifted up the Son of man;* not that they were to be the *priests* to offer him up (no, that was his own act, he *offered up himself),* but they would be his betrayers and murderers; see Acts ii. 23. They *lifted him up* to the cross, but then he lifted up himself to his Father. Observe with what tenderness and mildness Christ here speaks to those who he certainly knew would put him to death, to teach us not to hate or seek the hurt of any, though we may have reason to think they hate us and seek our hurt. Now, Christ speaks of his death as that which would be a powerful conviction of the infidelity of the Jews. *When you have lifted up the Son of man, then shall you know* this. And why then? *First,* Because careless and unthinking people are often taught the worth of mercies by the want of them, Luke xvii. 22. *Secondly,* The guilt of their sin in putting Christ to death would so awaken their consciences that they would be put upon serious enquiries after a Saviour, and then would know that Jesus was he who alone could save them. And so it proved, when, being told that with wicked hands they had *crucified and slain* the Son of God, they cried out, *What shall we do?* and were made to know assuredly that this Jesus was *Lord and Christ,* Acts ii. 36. *Thirdly,* There would be such signs and wonders attending his death, and the *lifting of him up* from death in his resurrection, as would give a stronger proof of his being the Messiah than any that had been yet given: and multitudes were hereby brought to believe that Jesus is the Christ, who had before contradicted and opposed him. *Fourthly,* By the death of Christ the pouring out of the Spirit was purchased, who would convince the world that *Jesus is he, ch.* xvi. 7, 8. *Fifthly,* The judgments which the Jews brought upon themselves, by putting Christ to death, which filled up the measure of their iniquity, were a sensible conviction to the most hardened among them that *Jesus was he.* Christ had often foretold that desolation as the just punishment of their invincible unbelief, and *when it came to pass (lo, it did come)* they could not but know that the great *prophet had been among them,* Ezek. xxxiii. 33.

[3.] What supported our Lord Jesus in the mean time (*v.* 29): *He that sent me is with me,* in my whole undertaking; *for the Father* (the fountain and first spring of this affair, from whom as its great cause and author it is derived) *hath not left me alone,* to manage it myself, hath not deserted the business nor me in the prosecution of it, for *do I always those things that please him.* Here is,

First, The assurance which Christ had of his Father's *presence* with him, which includes both a divine *power* going along with him to *enable* him for his work, and a divine *favour* manifested to him to *encourage* him in it. *He that sent me is with me,* Isa. xlii. 1; Ps. lxxxix. 21. This greatly *emboldens* our faith in Christ and our reliance upon his word that he had, and knew he had, his Father with him, to *confirm the word of his servant,* Isa. xliv. 26. The King of kings accompanied his own ambassador, to attest his mission and assist his management, and *never left him alone,* either solitary or weak; it also *aggravated* the wickedness of those that opposed him, and was an intimation to them of

the *premunire* they ran themselves into by resisting him, for thereby they were found *fighters against God.* How easily soever they might think to crush him and run him down, let them know he had one to back him with whom it is the greatest madness that can be to *contend.*

Secondly, The ground of this assurance: *For I do always those things that please him.* That is, 1. That great affair in which our Lord Jesus was *continually* engaged was an affair which the *Father that sent him* was highly *well pleased with.* His whole undertaking is called the *pleasure of the Lord* (Isa. liii. 10), because of the counsels of the eternal mind about it, and the complacency of the eternal mind in it. 2. His management of that affair was in nothing *displeasing* to his Father; in executing his commission he punctually observed all his instructions, and did in nothing vary from them. No mere man since the fall could say such a word as this (for *in many things we offend all)* but our Lord Jesus never offended his Father in any thing, but, as became him, he *fulfilled all righteousness.* This was necessary to the validity and value of the sacrifice he was to offer up; for if he had in any thing *displeased* the Father himself, and so had had any sin of his own to answer for, the Father could not have been pleased with him as a propitiation for our sins; but such a priest and such a sacrifice became us as was perfectly pure and spotless. We may likewise learn hence that God's servants may *then* expect God's presence with them when they *choose* and do *those things that please him,* Isa. lxvi. 4, 5.

V. Here is the good effect which this discourse of Christ's had upon some of his hearers (*v.* 30): *As he spoke these words many believed on him.* Note, 1. Though multitudes perish in their unbelief, yet there is a remnant according to the election of grace, who *believe to the saving of the soul.* If Israel, the whole body of the people, *be not gathered,* yet there are those of them in whom Christ will be *glorious,* Isa. xlix. 5. This the apostle insists upon, to reconcile the Jews' rejection with the *promises made unto their fathers.* There is a remnant, Rom. xi. 5. 2. The words of Christ, and particularly his *threatening* words, are made effectual by the grace of God to bring in poor souls to believe in him. When Christ told them that if they *believed not* they should *die in their sins,* and never get to heaven, they thought it was time to look about them, Rom. i. 16, 18. 3. Sometimes there is a *wide door opened,* and an *effectual* one, even where there are *many adversaries.* Christ will carry on his work, though *the heathen rage.* The gospel sometimes gains great victories where it meets with great opposition. Let this encourage God's ministers to preach the gospel, though it be with *much contention,* for they shall not *labour in vain.* Many may be *secretly* brought home to God by those endeavours which are openly contradicted and cavilled at by men of corrupt minds. Austin has an affectionate ejaculation in his lecture upon these words: *Utinam et, me loquenti, multi credant; non in me, sed mecum in eo—I wish that when I speak, many may believe, not on me, but with me on him.*

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

We have in these verses,

I. A comfortable doctrine laid down concerning the *spiritual liberty* of Christ's disciples, intended for the encouragement of *those* Jews *that believed.* Christ, knowing that his doctrine began to work upon some of his hearers, and perceiving that virtue had gone out of him, turned his discourse from the proud Pharisees, and addressed himself to those *weak* believers. When he had denounced wrath against those that were hardened in unbelief, then he spoke comfort to those few feeble *Jews that believed in him.* See here,

1. How graciously the Lord Jesus looks to those that *tremble at his word,* and are ready to receive it; he has something to say to those who have hearing ears, and will not pass by those who set themselves in his way, without speaking to them.

2. How carefully he cherishes the beginnings of grace, and meets those that are coming towards him. These *Jews that believed* were yet but *weak;* but Christ did not therefore cast them off, for he *gathers the lambs in his arms.* When faith is in its infancy, he has *knees* to *prevent it, breasts* for it to *suck,* that it may not *die from the womb.* In what he said to them, we have two things, which he saith to all that should at any time believe:—

(1.) The character of a true disciple of Christ: *If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed.* When they *believed on him,* as the great prophet, they gave up themselves to be *his disciples.* Now, at their

entrance into his school, he lays down this for a settled rule, that he would own none for his disciples but those that *continued in his word.* [1.] It is implied that there are many who profess themselves Christ's disciples who are not his *disciples indeed*, but only in show and name. [2.] It highly concerns those that are not *strong in faith* to see to it that they be *sound in the faith*, that, though not disciples of the highest form, they are nevertheless *disciples indeed.* [3.] Those who seem willing to be Christ's disciples ought to be told that they had as good never come to him, unless they come with a resolution by his grace to abide by him. Let those who have thoughts of covenanting with Christ have no thoughts of reserving a power of revocation. Children are sent to school, and bound apprentices, only for a *few years;* but those only are Christ's who are willing to be bound to him *for the term of life.* [4.] Those only that *continue in Christ's word* shall be accepted as his *disciples indeed*, that adhere to his word in every instance without partiality, and abide by it to the end without apostasy. It is *μενεῖν—to dwell* in Christ's word, as a man does at home, which is his centre, and rest, and refuge. Our converse with the word and conformity to it must be constant. If we continue disciples to the last, then, and not otherwise, we approve ourselves *disciples indeed.*

(2.) The privilege of a true disciple of Christ. Here are two precious promises made to those who thus approve themselves disciples indeed, *v.* 32.

[1.] "*You shall know the truth*, shall know all that truth which it is needful and profitable for you to know, and shall be more confirmed in the belief of it, shall know the certainty of it." Note, *First*, Even those who are true believers, and disciples indeed, yet may be, and are, much in the dark concerning many things which they should know. God's children are but children, and understand and speak as children. Did we not need to be taught, we should not need to be disciples. *Secondly*, It is a very great privilege to *know the truth*, to know the particular truths which we are to believe, in their mutual dependences and connections, and the grounds and reasons of our belief,—to know what is truth and what proves it to be so. *Thirdly*, It is a gracious promise of Christ, to all who continue in his word, that they shall know the truth as far as is needful and profitable for them. Christ's scholars are sure to be well taught.

[2.] *The truth shall make you free;* that is, *First*, The truth which Christ teaches tends to make men free, Isa. lxi. 1. Justification makes us free from the guilt of sin, by which we were *bound over* to the judgment of God, and *bound under* amazing fears; sanctification makes us free from the bondage of corruption, by which we were *restrained* from that service which is perfect freedom, and *constrained* to that which is perfect slavery. Gospel truth frees us from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and the more grievous burdens of the traditions of the elders. It makes us *free from* our spiritual enemies, free *in* the service of God, free *to* the privileges of sons, and free *of* the Jerusalem which is from above, which is free. *Secondly*, The knowing, entertaining, and believing, of this truth does actually *make us free*, free from prejudices, mistakes, and false notions, than which nothing more *enslaves* and *entangles* the soul, free from the dominion of lust and passion; and restores the soul to the government of itself, by reducing it into obedience to its Creator. The mind, by admitting the truth of Christ in the light and power, is vastly enlarged, and has scope and compass given it, is greatly elevated and raised above things of sense, and never acts with so true a liberty as when it acts under a divine command, 2 Cor. iii. 17. The enemies of Christianity pretend to *free thinking*, whereas really those are the freest reasonings that are guided by faith, and those are men of *free thought* whose thoughts are captivated and brought into obedience to Christ.

II. The offence which the carnal Jews took at this doctrine, and their objection against it. Though it was a doctrine that brought glad tidings of liberty to the captives, yet they cavilled at it, *v.* 33. The Pharisees grudged this comfortable word to those that believed, the standers by, who had *no part nor lot in this matter;* they thought themselves reflected upon and affronted by the gracious charter of liberty granted to those that believed, and therefore with a great deal of pride and envy they answered him, "*We Jews are Abraham's seed*, and therefore are *free-born*, and have not lost our birthright-freedom; *we were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou then*, to us Jews, *You shall be made free?* See here,

1. What it was that they were grieved at; it was an *innuendo* in those words, *You shall be made free*, as if the Jewish church and nation were in some sort of bondage, which reflected on the Jews in general, and as if all that did not believe in Christ continued in that bondage, which reflected on the Pharisees in particular. Note, The privileges of the faithful are the envy and vexation of unbelievers, Ps. cxii. 10.

2. What it was that they alleged against it; whereas Christ intimated that they needed to be made free, they urge, (1.) "We are Abraham's seed, and Abraham was a *prince and a great man;* though we live in Canaan, we are not descended from Canaan, nor under his doom, *a servant of servants shall he be;* we hold in *frank-almoign—free alms*, and not in *villenage—by a servile tenure.*" It is common for a sinking decaying family to boast of the glory and dignity of its ancestors, and to borrow honour from that name to which they repay disgrace; so the Jews here did. But

this was not all. Abraham was in covenant with God, and his children by his right, Rom. xi. 28. Now that covenant, no doubt, was a free charter, and invested them with privileges not consistent with a state of slavery, Rom. ix. 4. And therefore they thought they had no occasion with so *great a sum* as they reckoned faith in Christ to be *to obtain this freedom*, when they were thus free-born. Note, It is the common fault and folly of those that have pious parentage and education to trust to their privilege, and boast of it, as if it would atone for the want of real holiness. They were Abraham's seed, but what would this avail them, when we find one in hell that could call Abraham father? Saving benefits are not, like common privileges, conveyed by *entail* to us and our issue, nor can a title to heaven be made by *descent*, nor may we claim as *heirs at law*, by making out our pedigree; our title is purely by purchase, not our own but our Redeemer's for us, under certain provisos and limitations, which if we do not observe it will not avail us to be Abraham's seed. Thus many, when they are pressed with the necessity of regeneration, turn it off with this, *We are the church's children*; but they are not all Israel that are of Israel. (2.) *We were never in bondage to any man.* Now observe, [1.] How false this allegation was. I wonder how they could have the assurance to say a thing in the face of a congregation which was so notoriously *untrue.* Were not the seed of Abraham in bondage to the Egyptians? Were they not often in bondage to the neighbouring nations in the time of the judges? Were they not seventy years captives in Babylon? Nay, were they not at this time tributaries to the Romans, and, though not in a *personal*, yet in a *national* bondage to them, and groaning to be made free? And yet, to confront Christ, they have the impudence to say, *We were never in bondage.* Thus they would expose Christ to the ill-will both of the Jews, who were very jealous for the honour of their liberty, and of the Romans, who would not be thought to enslave the nations they conquered. [2.] How foolish the application was. Christ had spoken of a liberty wherewith the *truth* would make them free, which must be meant of a *spiritual* liberty, for truth as it is the *enriching*, so it is the *enfranchising* of the mind, and the *enlarging* of that from the captivity of error and prejudice; and yet they plead against the offer of *spiritual* liberty that they were never in *corporal* thraldom, as if, because they were never in bondage to any *man*, they were never in bondage to any *lust*. Note, Carnal hearts are sensible of no other grievances than those that molest the body and injure their secular affairs. Talk to them of encroachments upon their civil liberty and property,—tell them of waste committed upon their lands, or damage done to their houses,—and they understand you very well, and can give you a sensible answer; the thing touches them and affects them. But discourse to them of the bondage of sin, a captivity to Satan, and a liberty by Christ,—tell them of wrong done to their precious souls, and the hazard of their eternal welfare,—and *you bring certain strange things to their ears;* they say of it (as those did, Ezek. xx. 49), *Doth he not speak parables?* This was much like the blunder Nicodemus made about being *born again.*

III. Our Saviour's vindication of his doctrine from these objections, and the further explication of it, *v.* 34—37, where he does these four things:—

1. He shows that, notwithstanding their civil liberties and their visible church-membership, yet it was possible that they might be in a state of bondage (*v.* 34): *Whosoever commits sin*, though he be of Abraham's seed, and was never in bondage to any man, is the servant of sin. Observe, Christ does not upbraid them with the falsehood of their plea, or their present bondage, but further explains what he had said for their edification. Thus ministers should with meekness instruct those that oppose them, that they may *recover themselves*, not with passion provoke them to entangle themselves yet more. Now here,

(1.) The preface is very solemn: *Verily, verily, I say unto you;* an awful asseveration, which our Saviour often used, to command a reverent attention and a ready assent. The style of the prophets was, *Thus saith the Lord*, for they were *faithful as servants;* but Christ, being a Son, speaks in his own name: *I say unto you*, I the *Amen*, the faithful witness; he pawns his veracity upon it. "I say it to you, who boast of your relation to Abraham, as if that would save you."

(2.) The truth is of universal concern, though here delivered upon a particular occasion: *Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin*, and sadly needs to be made free. A state of sin is a state of bondage. [1.] See who it is on whom this brand is fastened—on him that *commits sin*, πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν ἁμαρτίαν—*every one that makes sin.* There is not a *just man* upon earth, that *lives, and sins not;* yet every one that sins is not a servant of sin, for then God would have no servants; but he that *makes sin*, that *makes choice* of sin, prefers the way of wickedness before the way of holiness (Jer. xliv. 16, 17),—that *makes a covenant* with sin, enters into league with it, and *makes a marriage* with it,—that *makes contrivances* of sin, *makes provision* for the flesh, and devises iniquity,—and that *makes a custom* of sin, who walks after the flesh, and *makes a trade* of sin. [2.] See what the brand is which Christ fastens upon those that thus *commit sin.* He stigmatizes them, gives them a mark of servitude. They are *servants of sin*, imprisoned under the guilt of sin, under an arrest, in hold for it, *concluded under sin*, and they are subject to the power of sin. He is a *servant of sin*, that is, he makes himself so, and is so accounted; he has *sold himself to work wickedness;* his lusts

give law to him, he is at their beck, and is not his own master. He does the work of sin, supports its interest, and accepts its wages, Rom. vi. 16.

2. He shows them that, being in a state of bondage, their having a place in the house of God would not entitle them to the inheritance of sons; for (*v.* 35) *the servant*, though he be in the house for awhile, yet, being but a *servant, abideth not in the house for ever.* Services (we say) are no inheritances, they are but *temporary*, and not for a *perpetuity; but the son* of the family abideth ever. Now, (1.) This points primarily at the rejection of the Jewish church and nation. Israel had been *God's son*, his *first-born;* but they wretchedly degenerated into a *servile* disposition, were enslaved to the world and the flesh, and therefore, though by virtue of their birthright they thought themselves secure of their church-membership, Christ tells them that having thus made themselves servants they should not *abide in the house for ever.* Jerusalem, by opposing the gospel of Christ, which proclaimed liberty, and adhering to the Sinai-covenant, which gendered to bondage, after its term was *expired* came to be *in bondage with her children* (Gal. iv. 24, 25), and therefore was unchurched and disfranchised, her charter seized and taken away, and she was cast out as the son of the bond-woman, Gen. xxi. 14. Chrysostom gives this sense of this place: "Think not to be made free from sin by the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, for Moses was but a servant, and had not that perpetual authority in the church which the Son had; but, if the Son make you free, it is well," *v.* 36. But, (2.) It looks further, to the rejection of all that are the *servants of sin*, and receive not the *adoption* of the *sons of God;* though those unprofitable servants may be in God's house awhile, as retainers to his family, yet there is a day coming when the children of the *bond-woman* and of the *free* shall be distinguished. True believers only, who are the children of the promise and of the covenant, are accounted free, and shall abide for ever in the house, as Isaac: they shall have a *nail* in the holy place on earth (Ezra ix. 8) and *mansions* in the holy place in heaven, *ch.* xiv. 2.

3. He shows them the way of deliverance out of this state of bondage into the *glorious liberty of the children of God*, Rom. viii. 21. The case of those that are the servants of sin is sad, but thanks be to God it is not helpless, it is not hopeless. As it is the privilege of all the sons of the family, and their dignity above the servants, that they abide in the house for ever; so he who is *the Son*, the first-born among many brethren, and the heir of all things, has a power both of manumission and of adoption (*v.* 36): *If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.* Note,

(1.) Jesus Christ in the gospel offers us *our freedom;* he has authority and power to *make free.* [1.] To *discharge prisoners;* this he does *in justification*, by making satisfaction for *our guilt* (on which the gospel offer is grounded, which is to all a conditional *act of indemnity*, and to all true believers, upon their believing, an absolute *charter of pardon*), and for *our debts*, for which we were by the law arrested and in execution. Christ, as our surety, or rather our *bail* (for he was not originally bound *with us*, but upon our insolvency bound *for us*), compounds with the creditor, answers the demands of injured justice with more than an *equivalent*, takes the *bond* and *judgment* into his own hands, and gives them up *cancelled* to all that by faith and repentance give him (if I may so say) a *counter-security* to save his honour harmless, and so they are *made free;* and from the debt, and every part thereof, they are for ever acquitted, exonerated, and discharged, and a general release is sealed of all actions and claims; while against those who refuse to come up to these terms the securities lie still in the Redeemer's hands, in full force. [2.] He has a power to rescue *bond-slaves*, and this he does in *sanctification;* by the powerful arguments of his gospel, and the powerful operations of his Spirit, he breaks the power of corruption in the soul, rallies the scattered forces of reason and virtue, and fortifies God's interest against sin and Satan, and so the soul is made free. [3.] He has a power to *naturalize strangers and foreigners*, and this he does in *adoption.* This is a further act of grace; we are not only forgiven and healed, but *preferred;* there is a charter of privileges as well as pardon; and thus the Son makes us free *denizens* of the kingdom of priests, the holy nation, the new Jerusalem.

(2.) Those whom Christ makes free are *free indeed.* It is not ἀληθῶς, the word used (*v.* 31) for disciples *indeed*, but ὄντως—*really.* It denotes, [1.] The truth and certainty of the promise, the liberty which the Jews boasted of was an *imaginary* liberty; they boasted of a *false gift;* but the liberty which Christ gives is a certain thing, it is real, and has real effects. The servants of sin promise themselves liberty, and fancy themselves free, when they have broken religion's bands asunder; but they cheat themselves. None are *free indeed* but those whom Christ *makes free.* [2.] It denotes the singular excellency of the freedom promised; it is a freedom that deserves the name, in comparison with which all other liberties are no better than slaveries, so much does it turn to the honour and advantage of those that are *made free* by it. It is a *glorious* liberty. It is that which *is* (so ὄντως signifies); it is *substance* (Prov. viii. 21); while the things of the world are shadows, things that *are not.*

4. He applies this to these unbelieving cavilling Jews, in answer to their boasts of relation to Abraham (*v.* 37): "*I know* very well *that you are Abraham's seed, but now you seek to kill me*, and therefore have forfeited

the honour of your relation to Abraham, *because my word hath no place in you.*" Observe here,

(1.) The dignity of their extraction admitted: "*I know that you are Abraham's seed,* every one knows it, and it is your honour." He grants them what was true, and in what they said that was false (that they were *never* in bondage to any) he does not *contradict* them, for he studied to *profit* them, and not to *provoke* them, and therefore said that which would please them: *I know that you are Abraham's seed.* They boasted of their descent from *Abraham,* as that which *aggrandized* their names, and made them exceedingly honourable; whereas really it did but *aggravate* their crimes, and make them exceedingly sinful. Out of their own mouths will he judge vain-glorious hypocrites, who boast of their parentage and education: "Are you Abraham's seed? Why then did you not tread in the steps of his faith and obedience?"

(2.) The inconsistency of their practice with this dignity: *But you seek to kill me.* They had attempted it several times, and were now designing it, which quickly appeared (*v.* 59), when they *took up stones to cast at him.* Christ knows all the wickedness, not only which men do, but which they seek, and design, and endeavour to do. To seek to kill any innocent man is a crime black enough, but to *compass and imagine* the death of him that was King of kings was a crime the heinousness of which we want words to express.

(3.) The reason of this inconsistency. Why were they that were Abraham's seed so very inveterate against Abraham's promised seed, in whom they and *all the families of the earth* should be *blessed?* Our Saviour here tells them, It is because *my word hath no place in you,* οὐ χωρεῖ ἐν υμῖν, *Non capit in vobis,* so the Vulgate. "My word *does not take with you,* you have no inclination to it, no relish of it, other things are more taking, more pleasing." Or, "It does not *take hold of you,* it has no power over you, makes no impression upon you." Some of the critics read it, *My word does not penetrate into you;* it descended as the rain, but it came upon them as the rain upon the rock, which it runs off, and did not soak into their hearts, as the rain upon the ploughed ground. The Syriac reads it, "*Because you do not acquiesce in my word;* you are not persuaded of the truth of it, nor pleased with the goodness of it." Our translation is very significant: *It has no place in you.* They *sought to kill him,* and so effectually to *silence* him, not because he had done them any harm, but because they could not bear the convincing, commanding power of his word. Note, [1.] The words of Christ ought to have a place in us, the innermost and uppermost place,—a *dwelling* place, as a man at home, and not as a stranger or sojourner,—a *working* place; it must have room to operate, to work sin out of us, and to work grace in us; it must have a *ruling* place, its place must be *upon the throne,* it must dwell in us richly. [2.] There are many that make a profession of religion in whom *the word of* Christ has no place; they will not *allow* it a place, for they do not like it; Satan does all he can to *displace* it; and other things possess the place it should have in us. [3.] Where the word of God has no place no good is to be expected, for room is left there for all wickedness. If the unclean spirit find the heart empty of Christ's word, he *enters in, and dwells there.*

38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. 39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication: we have one Father, *even* God. 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45 And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not. 46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

Here Christ and the Jews are still at issue; he sets himself to convince and convert them, while they still set themselves to contradict and oppose him.

I. He here traces the difference between his sentiments and theirs to a different rise and origin (*v.* 38): *I speak that which I have seen with my Father,* and *you* do *what you have seen with your father.* Here are two fathers spoken of, according to the two families into which the sons of men are divided

—God and the devil, and without controversy these are contrary the one to the other.

1. Christ's *doctrine* was from *heaven;* it was *copied* out of the *counsels* of infinite wisdom, and the kind intentions of eternal love. (1.) *I speak that which I have seen.* The discoveries Christ has made to us of God and another world are not grounded upon guess and hearsay, but upon ocular inspection; so that he was thoroughly *apprized* of the nature, and *assured* of the truth, of all he said. He that is given to be a witness to the people is an eye-witness, and therefore unexceptionable. (2.) It is what I have seen *with my Father.* The doctrine of Christ is not a plausible hypothesis, supported by probable arguments, but it is an exact counterpart of the incontestable truths lodged in the eternal mind. It was not only what he had *heard from* his Father, but what he had *seen with him* when *the counsel of peace was between them both.* Moses spoke what he heard from God, but he might not see the face of God; Paul had been in the third heaven, but what he had seen there he could not, he must not, utter; for it was Christ's prerogative to have *seen* what he *spoke,* and to *speak* what he had *seen.*

2. Their *doings* were from hell: "*You do that which you have seen with your father.* You do, by your own works, father yourselves, for it is evident whom you resemble, and therefore easy to find out your origin." As a child that is trained up with his father learns his father's words and fashions, and grows like him by an affected imitation as well as by a natural image, so these Jews, by their malicious opposition to Christ and the gospel, made themselves as like the devil as if they had industriously set him before them for their pattern.

II. He takes off and answers their vainglorious boasts of relation to Abraham and to God as their fathers, and shows the vanity and falsehood of their pretensions.

1. They pleaded relation to Abraham, and he replies to this plea. *They said, Abraham is our father, v.* 39. In this they intended, (1.) To do honour to themselves, and to make themselves look great. They had forgotten the mortification given them by that acknowledgment prescribed them (Deut. xxvi. 5), *A Syrian ready to perish was my father;* and the charge exhibited against their degenerate ancestors (whose steps they trod in, and not those of the first founder of the family), *Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite,* Ezek xvi. 3. As it is common for those families that are sinking and going to decay to boast most of their pedigree, so it is common for those churches that are corrupt and depraved to value themselves upon their antiquity and the eminence of their first planters. *Fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium—We have been Trojans, and there once was Troy.* (2.) They designed to cast an odium upon Christ as if he reflected upon the patriarch Abraham, in speaking of their father as one they had learned evil from. See how they sought an occasion to quarrel with him. Now Christ overthrows this plea, and exposes the vanity of it by a plain and cogent argument: "Abraham's children will do the works of Abraham, but you do not do Abraham's works, therefore you are not Abraham's children."

[1.] The proposition is plain: *If you were Abraham's children,* such children of Abraham as could claim an interest in the covenant made with him and his seed, which would indeed put an honour upon you, then you would *do the works of Abraham,* for to those only of Abraham's house who *kept the way of the Lord,* as Abraham did, would God *perform what he had spoken,*" Gen. xviii. 19. Those only are reckoned the seed of Abraham, to whom the promise belongs, who *tread in the steps* of his faith and obedience, Rom. iv. 12. Though the Jews had their genealogies, and kept them exact, yet they could not by them make out their relation to Abraham, so as to take the benefit of the old entail *(per formam doni—according to the form of the gift),* unless they walked in the same spirit; good women's relation to Sarah is proved only by this—*whose daughters you are as long as you do well,* and no longer, 1 Pet. iii. 6. Note, Those who would approve themselves Abraham's seed must not only be of Abraham's faith, but do Abraham's works (James ii. 21, 22),—must come at God's call, as he did,—must follow God wherever he leads them,—must resign their dearest comforts to him,—must be strangers and sojourners in this world,—must keep up the worship of God in their families, and always walk before God in their uprightness; for these were the works of Abraham.

[2.] The assumption is evident likewise: *But you do not do* the works of Abraham, for *you seek to kill me, a man that has told you the truth, which I have heard of God; this did not Abraham, v.* 40.

First, He shows them what their work was, their present work, which they were now about; they *sought to kill him;* and three things are intimated as an aggravation of their intention:—1. They were so *unnatural* as to seek the life of *a man,* a man like themselves, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, who had done them no harm, nor given them any provocation. You *imagine mischief against a man,* Ps. lxii. 3. 2. They were so *ungrateful* as to seek the life of one who had *told them the truth,* had not only done them no injury, but had done them the greatest kindness that could be; had not only not imposed upon them with a lie, but had instructed them in the most necessary and important truths; *was he therefore become their enemy?* 3. They were so *ungodly* as to seek the life of one who told them the truth *which he had heard from God,* who was a messenger sent from God to them, so that

their attempt against him was *quasi deicidium —an act of malice against God.* This was their work, and they persisted in it.

Secondly, He shows them that this did not become the children of Abraham; for *this did not Abraham.* 1. "He did nothing like this." He was famous for his humanity, witness his rescue of the captives; and for his piety, witness his obedience to the heavenly vision in many instances, and some tender ones. Abraham believed God; they were obstinate in unbelief: Abraham followed God; they fought against him; so that he would be *ignorant of them, and would not acknowledge them,* they were so unlike him, Isa. lxiii. 16. See Jer. xxii. 15—17. 2. "He would not have done thus if he had lived now, or I had lived then." *Hoc Abraham non fecisset—He would not have done this;* so some read it. We should thus reason ourselves out of any way of wickedness; would Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob have done so? We cannot expect to be *ever with them,* if we be *never like them.*

[3.] The conclusion follows of course (*v.* 41): "Whatever your boasts and pretensions be, you are not Abraham's children, but father yourselves upon another family (*v.* 41); there is *a father whose deeds you do,* whose spirit you are of, and whom you resemble." He does not *yet* say plainly that he means the devil, till they by their continued cavils forced him so to explain himself, which teaches us to treat even bad men with civility and respect, and not to be forward to say that *of* them, or *to* them, which, though *true,* sounds *harsh.* He tried whether they would suffer their own consciences to infer from what he said that they were the devil's children; and it is better to hear it from them now that we are called to *repent,* that is, to change our father and change our family, by changing our spirit and way, than to hear it from Christ in the great day.

2. So far were they from owning their unworthiness of relation to Abraham that they pleaded relation to God himself as their Father: "We are *not born of fornication,* we are not bastards, but legitimate sons; *we have one Father, even God.*

(1.) Some understand this literally. They were not the sons of the bondwoman, as the Ishmaelites were; nor begotten in incest, as the Moabites and Ammonites were (Deut. xxiii. 3); nor were they a spurious brood in Abraham's family, but Hebrews of the Hebrews; and, being born in *lawful* wedlock, they might call God *Father,* who instituted that honourable estate in innocency; for a legitimate seed, not tainted with divorces nor the plurality of wives, is called a *seed of God,* Mal. ii. 15.

(2.) Others take it figuratively. They begin to be aware now that Christ spoke of a *spiritual* not a *carnal* father, of the father of their religion; and so,

[1.] They deny themselves to be a generation of idolaters: "We are *not born of fornication,* are not the children of idolatrous parents, nor have been bred up in idolatrous worships." Idolatry is often spoken of as spiritual *whoredom,* and idolaters as *children of whoredoms,* Hosea ii. 4; Isa. lvii. 3. Now, if they meant that they were not the posterity of idolaters, the allegation was false, for no nation was more addicted to idolatry than the Jews before the captivity; if they meant no more than that they themselves were not idolaters, what then? A man may be free from idolatry, and yet perish in another iniquity, and be shut out of Abraham's covenant. *If thou commit no idolatry* (apply it to this spiritual fornication), yet if thou kill thou art become a *transgressor* of the covenant. A rebellious prodigal son will be disinherited, though he be not *born of fornication.*

[2.] They boast themselves to be true worshippers of the true God. We have not many fathers, as the heathens had, *gods many and lords many,* and yet were without God, as *filius populi—a son of the people,* has many fathers and yet none certain; no, *the Lord our God is one Lord* and *one Father,* and therefore it is well with us. Note, Those flatter themselves, and put a damning cheat upon their own souls, who imagine that their professing the true religion and worshipping the true God will save them, though they worship not God in spirit and in truth, nor are true to their profession. Now our Saviour gives a full answer to this fallacious plea (*v.* 42, 43), and proves, by two arguments, that they had no right to call God Father.

First, They did not love Christ: *If God were your Father, you would love me.* He had disproved their relation to Abraham by their going about to kill him (*v.* 40), but here he disproves their relation to God by their not loving and owning him. A man may pass for a *child* of Abraham if he do not appear an enemy to Christ by gross sin; but he cannot approve himself a child of God unless he be a faithful friend and follower of Christ. Note, All that have God for their Father have a true love to Jesus Christ, an esteem of his person, a grateful sense of his love, a sincere affection to his cause and kingdom, a complacency in the salvation wrought out by him and in the method and terms of it, and a care to keep his commandments, which is the surest evidence of our love to him. We are here in a state of probation, upon our trial how we will conduct ourselves towards our Maker, and accordingly it will be with us in the state of retribution. God has taken various methods to prove us, and this was one: he sent his Son into the world, with sufficient proofs of his sonship and mission, concluding that all that called him Father would *kiss his Son,* and bid *him* welcome who was the first-born among many brethren; see 1 John v. 1. By this our adoption will be proved or disproved—Did we love Christ, or no? *If any man do not,* he is so far from being a child of

God that he is *anathema*, accursed, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Now our Saviour proves that if they were God's children they would *love him;* for, saith he, I proceeded *forth and came from God.* They will love him; for, 1. He was the *Son of God: I proceeded forth from God.* Ἐξῆλθον· this means his divine ἐξέλευσις, or origin from the Father, by the communication of the divine essence, and also the union of the divine λογὸς to his human nature; so Dr. Whitby. Now this could not but recommend him to the affections of all that were *born of God.* Christ is called the *beloved*, because, being the beloved of the Father, he is certainly the beloved of all the saints, Eph. i. 6. 2. He was *sent of God*, came from him as an ambassador to the world of mankind. He did not *come of himself*, as the false prophets, who had not either their *mission* or their *message* from God, Jer. xxiii. 21. Observe the emphasis he lays upon this: *I came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.* He had both his credentials and his instructions from God; he came to *gather together in one the children of God* (*ch.* xi. 52), to bring *many sons to glory*, Heb. ii. 10. And would not all God's children embrace with both arms a messenger sent from their Father on *such* errands? But these Jews made it appear that they were nothing akin to God, by their want of affection to Jesus Christ.

Secondly, They did not understand him. It was a sign they did not belong to God's family that they did not understand the language and dialect of the family: *You do not understand my speech* (*v.* 43), την λαλιὰν την ἐμὴν. Christ's speech was divine and heavenly, but intelligible enough to those that were acquainted with the voice of Christ in the Old Testament. Those that had made the word of the Creator familiar to them needed no other key to the dialect of the Redeemer; and yet these Jews make strange of the doctrine of Christ, and find knots in it, and I know not what stumbling stones. Could a Galilean be known by his speech? An Ephraimite by his *sibboleth?* And would any have the confidence to call God Father to whom the Son of God was a barbarian, even when he spoke the will of God in the words of the Spirit of God? Note, Those who are not acquainted with the divine speech have reason to fear that they are strangers to the divine nature. Christ spoke the words of God (*ch.* iii. 34) in the dialect of the kingdom of God; and yet they, who pretended to belong to the kingdom, understood not the idioms and properties of it, but like strangers, and rude ones too, ridiculed it. And the reason why they did not understand Christ's speech made the matter much worse: *Even because you cannot hear my word*, that is, "You cannot persuade yourselves to hear it attentively, impartially, and without prejudice, as it should be heard." The meaning of this *cannot* is an obstinate *will not;* as the Jews could not hear Stephen (Acts vii. 57) nor Paul, Acts xxii. 22. Note, The rooted antipathy of men's corrupt hearts to the doctrine of Christ is the true reason of their ignorance of it, and of their errors and mistakes about it. They do not like it nor love it, and therefore they will not understand it; like Peter, who pretended he *knew not what the damsel said* (Matt. xxvi. 70), when in truth he knew not what to say to it. *You cannot hear my words*, for you have *stopped your ears* (Ps. lviii. 4, 5), and God, in a way of righteous judgment, *has made your ears heavy*, Isa. vi. 10.

III. Having thus disproved their relation both to Abraham and to God, he comes next to tell them plainly whose children they were: *You are of your father the devil*, *v.* 44. If they were not God's children, they were the devil's, for God and Satan divide the world of mankind; the devil is *therefore* said to *work in the children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. All wicked people are the devil's children, *children of Belial* (2 Cor. vi. 15), the serpent's seed (Gen. iii 15), children of the wicked one, Matt. xiii. 38. They partake of his nature, bear his image, obey his commands, and follow his example. Idolaters *said to a stock, Thou art our father*, Jer. ii. 27.

This is a high charge, and sounds very harsh and horrid, that any of the children of men, especially the church's children, should be called *children of the devil*, and therefore our Saviour fully proves it,

1. By a general argument: *The lusts of your father you will do*, θέλετε ποιεῖν. (1.) "You *do* the devil's lusts, the lusts which he would have you to fulfil; you gratify and please him, and comply with his temptations, and are *led captive by him at his will:* nay, you do those lusts which the devil himself fulfils. Fleshly lusts and worldly lusts the devil tempts men to; but, being a spirit, he cannot fulfil them himself. The peculiar lusts of the devil are *spiritual wickedness;* the lusts of the intellectual powers, and their corrupt reasonings; pride and envy, and wrath and malice; enmity to that which is good, and enticing others to that which is evil; these are lusts which the devil fulfils, and those who are under the dominion of these lusts resemble the devil, as the child does the parent. The more there is of contemplation, and contrivance, and secret complacency, in sin, the more it resembles the *lusts of the devil.* (2.) You *will do* the devil's lusts. The more there is of the *will* in these lusts, the more there is of the devil in them. When sin is committed *of choice* and not by surprise, with *pleasure* and not with reluctancy, when it is persisted in with a daring presumption and a desperate resolution, like theirs that said, *We have loved strangers and after them we will go*, then the sinner *will* do the devil's lusts. "The lusts of your father you *delight to do;*" so Dr. Hammond; they are rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel.

2. By two particular instances, wherein

they manifestly resembled the devil—*murder* and *lying*. The devil is an enemy to life, because God is the God of life and life is the happiness of man; and an enemy to truth, because God is the God of truth and truth is the bond of human society.

(1.) He was *a murderer from the beginning*, not from his own beginning, for he was created an angel of light, and had a first estate which was pure and good, but from the beginning of his apostasy, which was soon after the creation of man. He was *ανθρωπόκτονος—homicida, a man-slayer.* [1.] He was a *hater of man*, and so in affection and disposition a murderer of him. He has his name, *Satan*, from *sitnah—hatred.* He maligned God's image upon man, envied his happiness, and earnestly desired his ruin, was an avowed enemy to the whole race. [2.] He was man's tempter to *that* sin which brought death into the world, and so he was effectually the murderer of all mankind, which in Adam had but *one neck.* He was a murderer of souls, *deceived* them into sin, and by it *slew them* (Rom. vii. 11), poisoned man with the forbidden fruit, and, to aggravate the matter, made him his own murderer. Thus he was not only *at* the beginning, but *from* the beginning, which intimates that thus he *has been* ever since; as he began, so he continues, the murderer of men by his temptations. The great tempter is the great destroyer. The Jews called the devil *the angel of death.* [3.] He was the first wheel in the first murder that ever was committed by Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, 1 John iii. 12. If the devil had not been very strong in Cain, he could not have done such an unnatural thing as to kill his own brother. Cain killing his brother by the instigation of the devil, the devil is called the *murderer*, which does not speak Cain's personal guilt the less, but the devil's the more, whose torments, we have reason to think, will be the greater, when the time comes, for all that wickedness into which he has drawn men. See what reason we have to *stand* upon our guard *against the wiles of the devil*, and never to hearken to him (for he is a murderer, and certainly aims to do us mischief, even when he *speaks fair)*, and to wonder that he who is the murderer of the children of men should yet be, by their own consent, so much their master. Now herein these Jews were followers of him, and were murderers, like him; murderers of souls, which they led blindfold into the ditch, and made the *children of hell;* sworn enemies of Christ, and now ready to be his betrayers and murderers, for the same reason that Cain killed Abel. These Jews were that *seed of the serpent* that were to *bruise the heel* of the *seed of the woman: Now you seek to kill me.*

(2.) He was *a liar.* A lie is opposed to truth (1 John ii. 21), and accordingly the devil is here described to be,

[1.] An enemy to truth, and therefore to Christ. *First,* He is a *deserter* from the truth; he *abode not in the truth,* did not continue in the purity and rectitude of his nature wherein he was created, but left his first state; when he degenerated from goodness, he departed from truth, for his apostasy was founded in a lie. The angels were the *hosts of the Lord;* those that fell were not *true* to their commander and sovereign, they were not to be *trusted,* being charged with folly and defection, Job iv. 18. By *the truth* here we may understand the revealed will of God concerning the salvation of man by Jesus Christ, the truth which Christ was now preaching, and which the Jews opposed; herein they did *like their father the devil,* who, *seeing* the honour put upon the human nature in the *first Adam,* and *foreseeing* the much greater honour intended in the *second Adam,* would not be reconciled to that counsel of God, nor *stand in the truth* concerning it, but, from a spirit of pride and envy, set himself to resist it, and to thwart the designs of it; and so did these Jews here, as his children and agents. *Secondly,* He is *destitute* of the truth: *There is no truth in him.* His interest in the world is supported by lies and falsehoods, and there is no truth, nothing you can confide in, in him, nor in any thing he says or does. The notions he propagates concerning good and evil are false and erroneous, his proofs are lying wonders, his temptations are all cheats; he has great knowledge of the truth, but having no affection to it, but on the contrary being a sworn enemy to it, he is said to have *no truth in him.*

[2.] He is a friend and patron of lying: *When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own.* Three things are here said of the devil with reference to the sin of lying:—*First,* That he is *a liar;* his oracles were lying oracles, his prophets lying prophets, and the images in which he was worshipped *teachers of lies.* He tempted our first parents with a downright lie. All his temptations are carried on by lies, calling *evil good and good evil,* and promising impunity in sin; he knows them to be lies, and suggests them with an intention to deceive, and so to destroy. When he now *contradicted* the gospel, in the scribes and Pharisees, it was by lies; and when afterwards he *corrupted it,* in the *man of sin,* it was by strong delusions, and a great complicated lie. *Secondly,* That when he *speaks a lie* he *speaks of his own,* ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων. It is the proper *idiom* of his language; of *his own,* not of God; his Creator never put it into him. When men speak a lie they borrow it from the devil, *Satan fills their hearts to lie* (Acts v. 3); but when the devil speaks a lie the *model* of it is of his own framing, the motives to it are from himself, which bespeaks the desperate depth of wickedness into which those apostate spirits are sunk; as in their first defection they had no tempter, so their

sinfulness is still their own. *Thirdly*, That he is the *father of it*, ἀυτοῦ. 1. He is the father of every *lie;* not only of the lies which he himself suggests, but of those which others speak; he is the author and founder of all lies. When men speak lies, they speak from him, and as his mouth; they come originally from him, and bear his image. 2. He is the father of *every liar;* so it may be understood. God made men with a disposition to truth. It is congruous to reason and natural light, to the order of our faculties and the laws of society, that we should speak truth; but the devil, the author of sin, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, has so corrupted the nature of man that the wicked are said to be *estranged from the womb, speaking lies* (Ps. lviii. 3); he has taught them *with their tongues to use deceit*, Rom. iii. 13. He is the father of liars, who begat them, who trained them up in the *way of lying*, whom they resemble and obey, and with whom all *liars* shall have their portion for ever.

IV. Christ, having thus proved all murderers and all liars to be the devil's children, leaves it to the consciences of his hearers to say, *Thou art the man.* But he comes in the following verses to assist them in the application of it to themselves; he does not call them *liars*, but shows them that they were *no friends to truth*, and therein resembled him who *abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.* Two things he charges upon them:—

1. That they would not *believe the word of truth* (*v.* 45), ὅτι τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω, οὐ πιστεύετέ μοι.

(1.) Two ways it may be taken;—[1.] "Though I tell you the truth, yet you will not believe me (ὅτι), *that I do so.*" Though he gave abundant proof of his commission from God, and his affection to the children of men, yet they would not believe that he told them the truth. Now was *truth fallen in the street*, Isa. lix. 14, 15. The greatest truths with some gained not the least credit; for they *rebelled against the light*, Job xxiv. 13. Or, [2.] *Because I tell you the truth* (so we read it) therefore *you believe me not.* They would not receive him, nor entertain him as a prophet, because he told them some unpleasing truths which they did not care to hear, told them the truth concerning themselves and their own case, showed them their faces in a glass that would not flatter them; therefore they would not believe a word he said. Miserable is the case of those to whom the light of divine truth is become a torment.

(2.) Now, to show them the unreasonableness of their infidelity, he condescends to put the matter to this fair issue, *v.* 46. He and they being contrary, either he was in an error or they were. Now take it either way.

[1.] If *he* were in an error, why did they not convince him? The falsehood of *pretended* prophets was discovered either by the *ill tendency* of their doctrines (Deut. xiii. 2), or by the *ill tenour* of their conversation: *You shall know them by their fruits;* but (saith Christ) *which of you*, you of the sanhedrim, that take upon you to judge of prophets, *which of you convinceth me of sin?* They accused him of some of the worst of crimes—gluttony, drunkenness, blasphemy, sabbath-breaking, confederacy with Satan, and what not. But their accusations were malicious groundless calumnies, and such as every one that knew him knew to be *utterly false.* When they had done their utmost by trick and artifice, subornation and perjury, to prove some crime upon him, the very judge that condemned him owned he *found no fault in him.* The *sin* he here challenges them to convict him of is, *First*, An inconsistent doctrine. They had heard his testimony; could they show any thing in it absurd or unworthy to be believed, any contradiction either of himself or of the scriptures, or any corruption of truth or manners insinuated by his doctrine? *ch.* xviii. 20. Or, *Secondly*, An incongruous conversation: "Which of you can justly charge me with any thing, in word or deed, unbecoming a prophet?" See the wonderful condescension of our Lord Jesus, that he demanded not credit any further than the allowed motives of credibility supported his demands. See Jer. ii. 5, 31; Mic. vi. 3. Ministers may hence learn, 1. To *walk* so *circumspectly* as that it may not be in the power of their most strict observers to convince them of sin, *that the ministry be not blamed.* The only way not to be convicted of sin is not to sin. 2. To be willing to *admit a scrutiny;* though we are confident in many things that we are in the right, yet we should be willing to have it tried whether we be not in the wrong. See Job vi. 24.

[2.] If *they* were in an error, why were they not convinced by him? "*If I say the truth, why do you not believe me?* If you cannot convince me of error, you must own that I *say the truth*, and why do you not then *give me credit?* Why will you not deal with me upon trust?" Note, If men would but enquire into the reason of their infidelity, and examine why they do not believe that which they cannot gainsay, they would find themselves reduced to such absurdities as they could not but be ashamed of; for it will be found that the reason why we believe not in Jesus Christ is because we are not willing to part with our sins, and deny ourselves, and serve God faithfully; that we are not of the Christian religion, because we would not indeed be of any, and unbelief of our Redeemer resolves itself into a downright rebellion against our Creator.

2. Another thing charged upon them is that they would not hear the words of God (*v.* 47), which further shows how groundless their claim of relation to God was. Here is,

(1.) A doctrine laid down: *He that is of God heareth God's words;* that is, [1.] He is *willing* and *ready* to hear them, is sin-

cerely desirous to know what the mind of God is, and cheerfully embraces whatever he knows to be so. God's words have such an authority over, and such an agreeableness with all that are born of God, that they meet them, as the child Samuel did, with, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.* Let the word of the Lord come. [2.] He *apprehends* and *discerns* them, he so hears them as to perceive the *voice of God* in them, which the natural man does not, 1 Cor. ii. 14. He that is of God is *soon aware* of the discoveries he makes of himself of the *nearness of his name* (Ps. lxxv. 1), as they of the family know the master's tread, and the master's knock, and *open to him immediately* (Luke xii. 36), as the sheep know the voice of their shepherd from that of a stranger, *ch.* x. 4, 5; Cant. ii. 8.

(2.) The application of this doctrine, for the conviction of these unbelieving Jews: *You therefore hear them not;* that is, "You heed not, you understand not, you believe not, the words of God, nor care to hear them, *because you are not of God.* Your being thus deaf and dead to the words of God is a plain evidence that you are *not of God.*" It is in his word that God manifests himself and is present among us; we are therefore reckoned to be well or ill affected to God according as we are well or ill affected to his word; see 2 Cor. iv. 4; 1 John iv. 6. Or, their not being of God was the reason why they did not profitably *hear the words of God,* which Christ spoke; they did not understand and believe him, not because the things themselves were obscure or wanted evidence, but because the hearers were *not of God,* were not born again. If the word of the kingdom do not bring forth fruit, the blame is to be laid upon the soil, not upon the seed, as appears by the parable of the sower, Matt. xiii. 3.

48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? 49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Here is, I. The malice of hell breaking out in the base language which the unbelieving Jews gave to our Lord Jesus. Hitherto they had cavilled at his doctrine, and had made invidious remarks upon it; but, having shown themselves uneasy when he complained (*v.* 43, 47) that they would not hear him, now at length they fall to downright railing, *v.* 48. They were not the common people, but, as it should seem, the scribes and Pharisees, the men of consequence, who, when they saw themselves convicted of an obstinate infidelity, scornfully turned off the conviction with this: *Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?* See here, see it and wonder, see it and tremble,

1. What was the blasphemous character commonly given of our Lord Jesus among the wicked Jews, to which they refer. (1.) That he was a Samaritan, that is, that he was an enemy to their church and nation, one that they hated and could not endure. Thus they exposed him to the ill will of the people, with whom you could not put a man into a worse name than to call him *a Samaritan.* If he had been a Samaritan, he had been punishable, by the *beating of the rebels* (as they called it), for coming into the temple. They had often enough called him *a Galilean—a mean man;* but as if that were not enough, though it contradicted the other, they will have him a *Samaritan—a bad man.* The Jews to this day call the Christians, in reproach, *Cuthæi—Samaritans.* Note, Great endeavours have in all ages been used to make good people odious by putting them under black characters, and it is easy to run that down with a crowd and a cry which is once put into an ill name. Perhaps because Christ justly inveighed against the pride and tyranny of the priests and elders, they hereby suggest that he aimed at the ruin of their church, in aiming at its reformation, and was *falling away* to the Samaritans. (2.) That *he had a devil.* Either, [1.] That he was *in league with the devil.* Having reproached his doctrine as tending to Samaritanism, here they reflect upon his miracles as done in combination with Beelzebub. Or rather, [2.] That he was possessed with a devil, that he was a melancholy man, whose brain was *clouded,* or a mad man, whose brain was *heated,* and that which he said was no more to be believed than the extravagant rambles of a distracted man, or one in a delirium. Thus the divine revelation of those things which are above the discovery of reason have been often branded with the charge of enthusiasm, and the prophet was called a *mad fellow,* 2 Kings ix. 11; Hosea ix. 7. The inspiration of the Pagan oracles and prophets was indeed a frenzy, and those that had it were for the time beside themselves; but that which was truly *divine* was not so. *Wisdom is justified of her children,* as wisdom indeed.

2. How they undertook to justify this character, and applied it to the present occasion: *Say we not well that thou art so?* One would think that his excellent discourses should have altered their opinion of him, and have made them recant; but, instead of this, their hearts were more hardened and their prejudices confirmed. They value themselves on their enmity to Christ, as if they had never spoken *better* than when they spoke the worst they could of Jesus Christ. Those have arrived at the highest pitch of wickedness who avow their impiety, repeat what they should retract, and justify themselves in that for which they ought to condemn them-

selves. It is bad to say and do ill, but it is worse to *stand to it;* I do *well to be angry.* When Christ spoke with so much boldness against the sins of the great men, and thereby incensed them against him, those who were sensible of no interest but what is secular and sensual concluded him *beside himself,* for they thought none but a madman would lose his preferment, and hazard his life, for his religion and conscience.

II. The meekness and mercifulness of Heaven shining in Christ's reply to this vile calumny, *v.* 49, 50.

1. He denies their charge against him: *I have not a devil;* as Paul (Acts xxvi. 25), *I am not mad.* The imputation is unjust; "I am neither actuated by a devil, nor in compact with one;" and this he evidenced by what he did against the devil's kingdom. He takes no notice of their calling him a *Samaritan,* because it was a calumny that disproved itself, it was a personal reflection, and not worth taking notice of: but saying he had a devil reflected on his commission, and therefore he answered that. St. Augustine gives this gloss upon his not saying any thing to their calling him a Samaritan—that he was indeed that good Samaritan spoken of in the parable, Luke x. 33.

2. He asserts the sincerity of his own intentions: But *I honour my Father.* They suggested that he took undue honours to himself, and derogated from the honour due to God only, both which he *denies* here, in saying that he made it his business to honour his Father, and him only. It also proves that he *had not a devil;* for, if he had, he would not honour God. Note, Those who can truly say that they make it their constant care to honour God are sufficiently armed against the censures and reproaches of men.

3. He complains of the wrong they did him by their calumnies: *You do dishonour me.* By this it appears that, as man, he had a tender sense of the disgrace and indignity done him; reproach was a sword in his bones, and yet he underwent it for our salvation. It is the will of God that *all men should honour the Son,* yet there are many that *dishonour him;* such a contradiction is there in the carnal mind to the will of God. Christ honoured his Father so as never man did, and yet was himself dishonoured so as never man was; for, though God has promised that those who honour him he will honour, he never promised that men should honour them.

4. He clears himself from the imputation of vain glory, in saying this concerning himself, *v.* 50. See here, (1.) His *contempt* of worldly honour: *I seek not mine own glory.* He did not aim at this in what he had said of himself or against his persecutors; he did not court the applause of men, nor covet preferment in the world, but industriously declined both. He did not *seek his own glory* distinct from his Father's, nor had any separate interest of his own. For men to *search their own glory* is *not glory* indeed (Prov. xxv. 27), but rather their shame to be so much *out in their aim.* This comes in here as a reason why Christ made so light of their reproaches: "*You do dishonour me,* but cannot disturb me, shall not disquiet me, for I *seek not my own glory.*" Note, Those who are dead to men's praise can safely bear their contempt. (2.) His *comfort* under worldly dishonour: *There is one that seeketh and judgeth.* In two things Christ made it appear that he *sought not his own glory;* and here he tells us what satisfied him as to both. [1.] He did not *court* men's respect, but was indifferent to it, and in reference to this he saith, "*There is one that seeketh,* that will secure and advance, my interest in the esteem and affections of the people, while I am in no care about it. Note, God will seek *their* honour that do not seek *their own;* for before honour is humility. [2.] He did not *revenge* men's affronts, but was unconcerned at them, and in reference to this he saith, "*There is one that judgeth,* that will vindicate my honour, and severely reckon with those that trample upon it." Probably he refers here to the judgments that were coming upon the nation of the Jews for the indignities they did to the Lord Jesus. See Ps. xxxvii. 13—15. *I heard not, for thou wilt hear.* If we undertake to judge for ourselves, whatever damage we sustain, our recompence is in our own hands; but if we be, as we ought to be, humble appellants and patient expectants, we shall find, to our comfort, *there is one that judgeth.*

51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. 52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. 53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? 54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: 55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it,* and was glad. 57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 58 Jesus said unto them,

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

In these verses we have,

I. The doctrine of the immortality of believers laid down, *v.* 51. It is ushered in with the usual solemn preface, *Verily, verily, I say unto you,* which commands both attention and assent, and this is what he says, *If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death.* Here we have, 1. The *character* of a believer: he is one that *keeps the sayings* of the Lord Jesus, *τον λόγον τον ἐμὸν—my word;* that *word of mine* which I have delivered to you; this we must not only *receive,* but *keep;* not only *have,* but *hold.* We must keep it in mind and memory, keep it in love and affection, so keep it as in nothing to violate it or go contrary to it, keep it *without spot* (1 Tim. vi. 14), keep it as a trust committed to us, keep in it as our way, keep to it as our rule. 2. The *privilege* of a believer: *He shall by no means see death for ever;* so it is in the original. Not as if the bodies of believers were secured from the stroke of death. No, even the *children of the Most High* must *die like men,* and the followers of Christ have been, more than other men, in deaths often, and *killed all the day long;* how then is this promise made good that they *shall not see death?* Answer, (1.) The property of death is so altered to them that they do not see it as death, they do not see the terror of death, it is quite taken off; their sight does not *terminate* in death, as theirs does who *live by sense;* no, they look so clearly, so comfortably, through death, and beyond death, and are so taken up with their state on the other side death, that they overlook death, and *see it not.* (2.) The power of death is so broken that though there is no remedy, but they must *see death,* yet they shall not see death *for ever,* shall not be always shut up under its arrests, the day will come when *death shall be swallowed up in victory.* (3.) They are perfectly delivered from *eternal death,* shall not be *hurt of the second death.* That is the death especially meant here, that death which is *for ever,* which is opposed to everlasting life; this they shall never see, for they shall *never come into condemnation;* they shall have their everlasting lot where there will be *no more death,* where they *cannot die any more,* Luke xx. 36. Though now they cannot avoid seeing death, and tasting it too, yet they shall shortly be there where it will be *seen no more for ever,* Exod. xiv. 13.

II. The Jews cavil at this doctrine. Instead of laying hold of this precious promise of immortality, which the nature of man has an ambition of (who is there that does not love life, and dread the sight of death?) they lay hold of this occasion to reproach him that makes them so kind an offer: *Now we know that thou hast a devil.* Abraham *is dead.* Observe here,

1. Their *railing:* "*Now we know that thou hast a devil,* that thou art a madman; thou ravest, and sayest thou knowest not what." See how these swine trample underfoot the precious pearls of gospel promises. If now at last they had evidence to prove him *mad,* why did they say (*v.* 48), before they had that proof, *Thou hast a devil?* But this is the method of malice, first to *fasten* an invidious charge, and then to *fish* for evidence of it: *Now we know that thou hast a devil.* If he had not abundantly proved himself a *teacher come from God,* his promises of immortality to his credulous followers might justly have been ridiculed, and charity itself would have imputed them to a crazed fancy; but his doctrine was evidently divine, his miracles confirmed it, and the Jews' religion taught them to expect such a prophet, and to believe in him; for them therefore thus to reject him was to abandon that promise to which their *twelve tribes hoped to come,* Acts xxvi. 7.

2. Their *reasoning,* and the colour they had to *run him down* thus. In short, they look upon him as guilty of an insufferable piece of arrogance, in making himself greater than *Abraham and the prophets: Abraham is dead,* and *the prophets,* they are dead too; very true, by the same token that these Jews were the genuine offspring of those that killed them. Now, (1.) It is true that Abraham and the prophets were great men, great in the favour of God, and great in the esteem of all good men. (2.) It is true that they *kept God's sayings,* and were obedient to them; and yet, (3.) It is true that they *died;* they never pretended to *have,* much less to *give,* immortality, but every one in his own order was *gathered to his people.* It was their honour that they *died in faith,* but die they must. Why should a good man be afraid to die, when Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead? They have *tracked* the way through that darksome valley, which should reconcile us to death and help to take off the terror of it. Now they think Christ talks madly, when he saith, *If a man keep my sayings, he shall never taste death. Tasting* death means the same thing with *seeing* it; and well may death be represented as grievous to *several* of the senses, which is the destruction of them *all.* Now their arguing goes upon two mistakes:—[1.] They understood Christ of an immortality in this world, and this was a mistake. In the sense that Christ spoke, it was not true that *Abraham and the prophets* were *dead,* for God is still the *God of Abraham* and the *God of the holy prophets* (Rev. xxii. 6); now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; therefore Abraham and the prophets are still alive, and, as

Christ meant it, they had not *seen* nor *tasted* death. [2.] They thought none could be greater than Abraham and the prophets, whereas they could not but know that the Messiah would be greater than Abraham or any of the prophets; they did virtuously, but he excelled them all; nay, they borrowed their greatness from him. It was the honour of Abraham that he was the Father of the Messiah, and the honour of the prophets that they testified beforehand concerning him: so that he certainly *obtained a* far *more excellent name than they*. Therefore, instead of inferring from Christ's making himself greater than Abraham that he had a *devil*, they should have inferred from his proving himself so (by doing the works which neither Abraham nor the prophets ever did) that he was the Christ; but their eyes were blinded. They scornfully asked, *Whom makest thou thyself?* As if he had been guilty of pride and vain-glory; whereas he was so far from making himself greater than he was that he now drew a veil over his own glory, emptied himself, and made himself less than he was, and was the greatest example of humility that ever was.

III. Christ's reply to this cavil; still he vouchsafes to reason with them, that every mouth may be stopped. No doubt he could have struck them dumb or dead upon the spot, but this was the *day of his patience*.

1. In his answer he insists not upon his own testimony concerning himself, but waives it as not sufficient nor conclusive (*v.* 54): *If I honour myself, my honour is nothing*, ἐαν ἐγὼ δοξάζω—*if I glorify myself*. Note, Self-honour is no honour; and the affectation of glory is both the forfeiture and the defeasance of it: it is *not glory* (Prov. xxv. 27), but so great a reproach that there is no sin which men are more industrious to hide than this; even he that most affects praise would not be thought to do it. Honour of our own creating is a mere chimera, has nothing in it, and therefore is called *vain-glory*. Self-admirers are self-*deceivers*. Our Lord Jesus was not one that *honoured himself*, as they represented him; he was *crowned* by him who is the fountain of honour, and glorified not himself to be made a high priest, Heb. v. 4, 5.

2. He refers himself to *his* Father, God; and to *their* father, Abraham.

(1.) To his Father, *God: It is my Father that honoureth me*. By this he means, [1.] That he *derived* from his Father all the honour he now claimed; he had commanded them to believe in him, to follow him, and to keep his word, all which put an honour upon him; but it was the Father that *laid help* upon him, that *lodged* all *fulness* in him, that sanctified him, and sealed him, and sent him into the world to receive all the honours due to the Messiah, and this justified him in all these demands of respect. [2.] That he *depended* upon his Father for all the honour he further *looked for*. He courted not the applauses of the age, but despised them; for his eye and heart were upon the glory which the Father had promised him, and *which he had with the Father before the world was*. He aimed at an advancement with which the Father was to *exalt him, a name* he was to *give him*, Phil. ii. 8, 9. Note, Christ and all that are his depend upon God for their honour; and he that is sure of honour where he is known cares not though he be slighted where he is in disguise. Appealing thus often to his Father, and his Father's testimony of him, which yet the Jews did not admit nor give credit to,

First, He here takes occasion to show the reason of *their* incredulity, notwithstanding *this* testimony—and this was their *unacquaintedness* with God; as if he had said, "But why should I talk to you of my Father's honouring me, when he is one you know nothing of? You *say of him that he is your God, yet you have not known him*." Here observe,

a. The profession they made of relation to God: "*You say that he is your God*, the God you have chosen, and are in covenant with; you say that you are Israel; but all are not so indeed that are of Israel," Rom. ix. 6. Note, Many pretend to have an interest in God, and say that he is *theirs*, who yet have no just cause to say so. Those who called themselves the *temple of the Lord*, having *profaned the excellency of Jacob*, did but trust in lying words. What will it avail us to say, He is *our God*, if we be not in sincerity *his people*, nor such as he will own? Christ mentions here their profession of relation to God, as that which was an aggravation of their unbelief. All people will honour those whom their God honours; but these Jews, who said that the Lord was their God, studied how to put the utmost disgrace upon one upon whom their God put honour. Note, The profession we make of a covenant relation to God, and an interest in him, if it be not improved *by us* will be improved *against us*.

b. Their ignorance of him, and estrangement from him, notwithstanding this profession: *Yet you have not known him*. (*a.*) *You know him not at all*. These Pharisees were so taken up with the study of their traditions concerning things foreign and trifling that they never minded the most needful and useful knowledge; like the false prophets of old, who *caused people to forget God's name by their dreams*, Jer. xxiii. 27. Or, (*b.*) *You know him not aright*, but mistake concerning him; and this is as bad as not knowing him at all, or worse. Men may be able to dispute subtly concerning God, and yet may think him such a one as themselves, and *not know him*. You say that he is *yours*, and it is natural to us to desire to know *our own*, yet you *know him not*. Note, There are many who *claim kindred* to God who yet have no acquaintance with him. It is only the name of God which they have learned to talk of, and to hector with; but for the nature of God, his attributes and perfections, and relations

to his creatures, they know nothing of the matter; we *speak this to their shame*, 1 Cor. xv. 34. Multitudes satisfy themselves, but deceive themselves, with a titular relation to an *unknown God*. This Christ charges upon the Jews here, [*a*.] To show how vain and groundless their pretensions of relation to God were. "You say that he is yours, but you give yourselves the lie, for it is plain that you do not know him;" and we reckon that a cheat is effectually convicted if it be found that he is ignorant of the persons he pretends alliance to. [*b*.] To show the true reason why they were not wrought upon by Christ's doctrine and miracles. They knew not God; and therefore perceived not the image of God, nor the voice of God in Christ. Note, The reason why men receive not the *gospel of Christ* is because they have not the *knowledge of God*. Men *submit not to the righteousness of Christ* because they are *ignorant of God's righteousness*, Rom. x. 3. They that know not God, and obey not the gospel of Christ, are put together, 2 Thess. i. 8.

Secondly, He gives them the reason of *his* assurance that his Father would *honour* him and *own him*: *But I know him;* and again, *I know him;* which bespeaks, not only his *acquaintance* with him, having lain in his bosom, but his *confidence* in him, to stand by him, and bear him out in his whole undertaking; as was prophesied concerning him (Isa. l. 7, 8); *I know* that I shall not be ashamed, for he is near that justifies; and as Paul, "*I know whom I have believed* (2 Tim. i. 12), I know him to be faithful, and powerful, and heartily engaged in the cause which I know to be his *own*." Observe, 1. How he *professes* his knowledge of his Father, with the greatest certainty, as one that was neither afraid nor ashamed to own it: *If I should say I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you.* He would not deny his relation to God, to humour the Jews, and to avoid their reproaches, and prevent further trouble; nor would he retract what he had said, nor confess himself either deceived or a deceiver; if he should, he would be found a false witness against God and himself. Note, Those who disown their religion and relation to God, as Peter, are liars, as much as hypocrites are, who pretend to know him, when they do not. See 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. Mr. Clark observes well, upon this, that it is a great sin to deny God's grace in us. 2. How he *proves* his knowledge of his Father: *I know him and keep his sayings*, or *his word*. Christ, as man, was obedient to the moral law, and, as Redeemer, to the mediatorial law; and in both he kept *his Father's* word, and *his own word* with the Father. Christ requires of us (*v*. 51) that we *keep his sayings;* and he has set before us a copy of obedience, a copy without a blot: he *kept his Father's sayings;* well might he who *learned obedience* teach it; see Heb. v. 8, 9. Christ by this evinced that he knew the Father. Note, The best proof of our acquaintance with God is our obedience to him. Those only know God aright that keep his word; it is a ruled case, 1 John ii. 3. *Hereby we know that we know him* (and do not only fancy it), *if we keep his commandments.*

(2.) Christ refers them to *their* father, whom they boasted so much of a relation to, and that was Abraham, and this closes the discourse.

[1.] Christ asserts Abraham's prospect of him, and respect to him: *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad*, *v*. 56. And by this he proves that he was not at all out of the way when he *made himself greater than Abraham.* Two things he here speaks of as instances of that patriarch's respect to the promised Messiah:—

First, The ambition he had to *see his day: He rejoiced*, ἠγαλλιάσατο—*he leaped at it.* The word, though it commonly signifies *rejoicing*, must here signify a transport of *desire* rather than of *joy*, for otherwise the latter part of the verse would be a tautology; he *saw it, and was glad.* He *reached out*, or *stretched himself forth*, that he might *see my day;* as Zaccheus, that ran before, and climbed the tree, *to see Jesus.* The notices he had received of the Messiah to come had raised in him an expectation of something *great*, which he earnestly longed to know more of. The dark intimation of that which is considerable puts men upon enquiry, and makes them earnestly ask *Who?* and *What?* and *Where?* and *When?* and *How?* And thus the prophets of the Old Testament, having a general idea of a grace that should *come*, *searched diligently* (1 Pet. i. 10), and Abraham was as industrious herein as any of them. God told him of a land that he would give his posterity, and of the wealth and honour he designed them (Gen. xv. 14); but he never *leaped* thus to see that day, as he did to see the day of the Son of man. He could not look with so much indifferency upon the promised *seed* as he did upon the promised land; *in that* he was, but *to the other* he could not be, contentedly a stranger. Note, Those who rightly know any thing of Christ cannot but be earnestly desirous to know more of him. Those who discern the dawning of the light of the Sun of righteousness cannot but wish to see his rising. The mystery of redemption is that which *angels desire to look into*, much more should we, who are more immediately concerned in it. Abraham desired to see Christ's day, though it was at a great distance; but this degenerate seed of his discerned not his day, nor bade it welcome when it came. The appearing of Christ, which gracious souls love and long for, carnal hearts dread and loathe.

Secondly, The satisfaction he had in what he did see of it: *He saw it, and was glad* Observe here,

a. How God gratified the pious desire of Abraham; he longed to see Christ's day, and he *saw it*. Though he saw it not so plainly, and fully, and distinctly as we now see it un-

der the gospel, yet he saw something of it, more *afterwards* than he did at first. Note, To him that has, and to him that asks, shall be given; to him that uses and improves what he has, and that desires and prays for more of the knowledge of Christ, God will give more. But how did Abraham see Christ's day? (*a.*) Some understand it of the sight he had of it in the other world. The separate soul of Abraham, when the veil of flesh was rent, saw the mysteries of the kingdom of God in heaven. Calvin mentions this sense of it, and does not much disallow it. Note, The longings of gracious souls after Jesus Christ will be fully satisfied when they come to heaven, and not till then. But, (*b.*) It is more commonly understood of some sight he had of *Christ's day* in this world. They that *received not the promises*, yet *saw them afar off*, Heb. xi. 13. Balaam saw Christ, but not *now*, not *nigh*. There is room to conjecture that Abraham had some vision of Christ and his day, for his own private satisfaction, which is not, nor must be, recorded in his story, like that of Daniel's, which must be *shut up, and sealed unto the time of the end*, Dan. xii. 4. Christ knew what Abraham saw better than Moses did. But there are divers things recorded in which Abraham saw more of that which he longed to see than he did when the promise was first made to him. He saw in Melchizedek one *made like unto the Son of God*, and a priest for ever; he saw an appearance of Jehovah, attended with two angels, in the plains of Mamre. In the prevalency of his intercession for Sodom he saw a specimen of Christ's intercession; in the casting out of Ishmael, and the establishment of the covenant with Isaac, he saw a figure of the gospel day, which is Christ's day; for these things were an allegory. In offering Isaac, and the ram instead of Isaac, he saw a double type of the great sacrifice; and his calling the place *Jehovah-jireh—It shall be seen*, intimates that he saw something more in it than others did, which time would produce; and in making his servant *put his hand under his thigh*, when he swore, he had a regard to the Messiah.

b. How *Abraham* entertained these discoveries of Christ's day, and bade them welcome: *He saw, and was glad.* He was glad of what he *saw* of God's favour to himself, and glad of what he *foresaw* of the mercy God had in store for the world. Perhaps this refers to Abraham's laughing when God assured him of a son by Sarah (Gen. xvii. 16, 17), for that was not a laughter of distrust as Sarah's, but of joy; in that promise he saw Christ's day, and it *filled him with joy unspeakable.* Thus he embraced the promises. Note, A believing sight of Christ and his day will put gladness into the heart. No joy like the joy of faith; we are never acquainted with true pleasure till we are acquainted with Christ.

[2.] The Jews cavil at this, and reproach him for it (*v.* 57): *Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?* Here, *First*, They suppose that if Abraham saw him and his day he also had seen Abraham, which yet was not a necessary *innuendo*, but this turn of his words would best serve to expose him; yet it was true that Christ had seen Abraham, and had talked with him as a man talks with his friend. *Secondly*, They suppose it a very absurd thing for him to pretend to have seen Abraham, who was *dead* so many ages before he was born. The state of the dead is an *invisible* state; but here they ran upon the old mistake, understanding that corporally which Christ spoke spiritually. Now this gave them occasion to *despise his youth*, and to upbraid him with it, as if he were *but of yesterday, and knew* nothing: *Thou art not yet fifty years old.* They might as well have said, *Thou art not forty;* for he was now but thirty-two or thirty-three years old. As to this, Irenæus, one of the first fathers, with this passage supports the tradition which he says he had from some that had conversed with St. John, that our Saviour lived to be fifty years old, which he contends for, *Advers. Hæres.* lib. ii. cap. 39, 40. See what little credit is to be given to tradition; and, as to this here, the Jews spoke *at random;* some year they would mention, and therefore pitched upon one that they thought he was far enough short of; he did not look to be forty, but they were sure he could not be fifty, much less contemporary with Abraham. Old age is reckoned to begin at fifty (Num. iv. 47), so that they meant no more than this, "Thou art not to be reckoned an old man; many of us are much thy seniors, and yet pretend not to have seen Abraham." Some think that his countenance was so altered, with grief and watching, that, together with the gravity of his aspect, it made him look like a man of fifty years old: *his visage was so marred*, Isa. lii. 14.

[3.] Our Saviour gives an effectual answer to this cavil, by a solemn assertion of his own seniority even to Abraham himself (*v.* 58): "*Verily, verily, I say unto you;* I do not only say it in private to my own disciples, who will be sure to say as I say, but *to you* my enemies and persecutors; I say it to your faces, take it how you will: *Before Abraham was, I am;*" πρὶν Αβραὰμ γενέσθαι, ἐγώ εἰμι, *Before Abraham was made or born, I am.* The change of the word is observable, and bespeaks Abraham a creature, and himself the Creator; well therefore might he make himself *greater* than Abraham. *Before Abraham he was, First*, As God. *I am*, is the name of God (Exod. iii. 14); it denotes his self-existence; he does not say, *I was*, but *I am*, for he is the first and the last, immutably the same (Rev. i. 8); thus he was not only before Abraham, but before *all worlds, ch.* i. 1; Prov. viii. 23. *Secondly*, As Mediator. He was the appointed Messiah, long before Abraham; the *Lamb slain from the foundation of*

the world (Rev. xiii. 8), the channel of conveyance of light, life, and love from God to man. This supposes his divine nature, that he is the same in himself from eternity (Heb. xiii. 8), and that he is the same to man ever since the fall; he was made of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, to Adam, and Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Shem, and all the patriarchs that lived and died by faith in him before Abraham was born. Abraham was the root of the Jewish nation, the rock out of which they were hewn. If Christ was before Abraham, his doctrine and religion were no novelty, but were, in the substance of them, prior to Judaism, and ought to take place of it.

[4.] This great word ended the dispute *abruptly*, and put a period to it: they could bear to hear no more from him, and he needed to say no more to them, having witnessed this good confession, which was sufficient to support all his claims. One would think that Christ's discourse, in which shone so much both of grace and glory, should have captivated them all; but their inveterate prejudice against the holy spiritual doctrine and law of Christ, which were so contrary to their pride and worldliness, baffled all the methods of conviction. Now was fulfilled that prophecy (Mal. iii. 1, 2), that when the messenger of the covenant should *come to his temple* they *would not abide the day of his coming*, because he would be *like a refiner's fire*. Observe here,

First, How they were *enraged* at Christ for what he said: *They took up stones to cast at him, v.* 59. Perhaps they looked upon him as a blasphemer, and such were indeed to be stoned (Lev. xxiv. 16); but they must be first legally tried and convicted. Farewell justice and order if every man pretend to execute a law at his pleasure. Besides, they had said but just now that he was a distracted crack-brained man, and if so it was against all reason and equity to punish him as a malefactor for what he said. *They took up stones.* Dr. Lightfoot will tell you how they came to have stones so ready in the temple; they had workmen at this time repairing the temple, or making some additions, and the pieces of stone which they hewed off served for this purpose. See here the desperate power of sin and Satan in and over the children of disobedience. Who would think that ever there should be such wickedness as this in men, such an open and daring rebellion against one that undeniably proved himself to be the Son of God? Thus every one has a stone to throw at his holy religion, Acts xxviii. 22.

Secondly, How he made his *escape* out of their hands. 1. He *absconded;* Jesus *hid himself*, ἐκρύβη—*he was hid*, either by the crowd of those that wished well to him, to shelter him (he that ought to have been upon a throne, high and lifted up, is content to be *lost in a crowd)*; or perhaps he concealed himself behind some of the walls or pillars of the temple *(in the secret of his tabernacle he shall hide me*, Ps. xxvii. 5); or by a divine power, casting a mist before their eyes, he made himself invisible to them. *When the wicked rise a man is hidden*, a wise and good man, Prov. xxviii. 12, 28. Not that Christ was afraid or ashamed to stand by what he had said, but his *hour was not yet come*, and he would countenance the flight of his ministers and people in times of persecution, when they are called to it. The Lord hid Jeremiah and Baruch, Jer. xxxvi. 26. 2. He *departed*, he *went out of the temple*, going *through the midst of them*, undiscovered, and *so passed by*. This was not a cowardly inglorious flight, nor such as argued either guilt or fear. It was foretold concerning him that he should not fail nor be discouraged, Isa. xlii. 4. But, (1.) It was an instance of his power over his enemies, and that they could do no more against him than he gave them leave to do; by which it appears that when afterwards he was taken in their pits he *offered himself, ch.* x. 18. They now thought they had made sure of him and yet he *passed through the midst* of them, either their eyes being blinded or their hands tied, and thus he left them to fume, like a lion *disappointed of his prey*. (2.) It was an instance of his prudent provision for his own safety, when he knew that his work was not done, nor his testimony finished; thus he gave an example to his own rule, *When they persecute you in one city flee to another;* nay, if occasion be, to a *wilderness*, for so Elijah did (1 Kings xix. 3, 4), and the woman, the church, Rev. xii. 6. When they took up loose stones to throw at Christ, he could have commanded the fixed stones, which did *cry out of the wall* against them, to avenge his cause, or the earth to open and swallow them up; but he chose to accommodate himself to the state he was in, to make the example imitable by the prudence of his followers, without a miracle. (3.) It was a righteous deserting of those who (worse than the Gadarenes, who *prayed him to depart)* stoned him from among them. Christ will not long stay with those who bid him be gone. Christ did again visit the temple after this; as one *loth to depart*, he *bade oft farewell;* but at last he abandoned it for ever, and left it *desolate*. Christ now *went through* the midst of the Jews, and none of them courted his stay, nor stirred up himself to take hold of him, but were even content to let him go. Note, God never forsakes any till they have first provoked him to withdraw, and will have none of him. Calvin observes that these chief priests, when they had driven Christ out of the temple, valued themselves on the possession they kept of it: "But," says he, "those deceive themselves who are proud of a church or temple which Christ has forsaken." *Longe falluntur, cum templum se habere putant Deo vacuum.* When Christ left them it is said that he passed by silently and unobserved; παρῆγεν οὕτως, so that they

were not aware of him. Note, Christ's departures from a church, or a particular soul, are often *secret*, and not soon taken notice of. As *the kingdom of God comes not*, so it *goes not, with observation.* See Judg. xvi. 20. *Samson wist not that the Lord was departed from him.* Thus it was with these forsaken Jews, God left them, and they never missed him.

CHAP. IX.

After Christ's departure out of the temple, in the close of the foregoing chapter, and before this happened which is recorded in this chapter, he had been for some time abroad in the country, it is supposed about two or three months; in which interval of time Dr. Lightfoot and other harmonists place all the passages that occur from Luke x. 17 to xiii. 17. What is recorded ch. vii. and viii. was at the feast of tabernacles, in September; what is recorded in this and the following chapter was at the feast of dedication, in December, ch. x. 22. Mr. Clark and others place this immediately after the foregoing chapter. In this chapter we have, I. The miraculous cure of a man that was born blind, ver. 1—7. II. The discourses which were occasioned by it. 1. A discourse of the neighbours among themselves, and with the man, ver. 8—12. 2. Between the Pharisees and the man, ver. 13—34. 3. Between Christ and the poor man, ver. 35—38. 4. Between Christ and the Pharisees, ver. 39 to the end.

AND as *Jesus* passed by, he saw
a man which was blind from
his birth. 2 And his disciples asked
him, saying, Master, who did sin,
this man, or his parents, that he was
born blind? 3 Jesus answered,
Neither hath this man sinned, nor
his parents: but that the works of
God should be made manifest in him.
4 I must work the works of him that
sent me, while it is day: the night
cometh, when no man can work. 5
As long as I am in the world, I am
the light of the world. 6 When he
had thus spoken, he spat on the
ground, and made clay of the spittle,
and he anointed the eyes of the blind
man with the clay, 7 And said unto
him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam,
(which is by interpretation, Sent.)
He went his way therefore, and
washed, and came seeing.

We have here sight given to a poor beggar that had been blind from his birth. Observe,

I. The notice which our Lord Jesus took of the piteous case of this poor blind man (*v.* 1): *As Jesus passed by he saw a man which was blind from his birth.* The first words seem to refer to the last of the foregoing chapter, and countenance the opinion of those who in the harmony place this story immediately after that. There it was said, παρῆγεν—*he passed by*, and here, without so much as repeating his name (though our translators supply it) καὶ παράγω—*and as he passed by.* 1. Though the Jews had so basely abused him, and both by word and deed gave him the highest provocation imaginable, yet he did not miss any opportunity of doing good among them, nor take up a resolution, as justly he might have done, never to have favoured them with any good offices. The cure of this blind man was a kindness to *the public*, enabling him to work for his living who before was a charge and burden to the neighbourhood. It is noble, and generous, and Christ-like, to be willing to *serve the public*, even when we are slighted and disobliged by them, or think ourselves so. 2. Though he was in his flight from a threatening danger, and escaping for his life, yet he willingly halted and staid awhile to show mercy to this poor man. We make more haste than good speed when we out-run opportunities of doing good. 3. When the Pharisees drove Christ from them, he went to this poor blind beggar. Some of the ancients make this a figure of the bringing of the gospel to the Gentiles, *who sat in darkness*, when the Jews had rejected it, and driven it from them 4. Christ took this poor blind man in his way, and cured him *in transitu—as he passed by.* Thus should we take occasions of doing good, even as we *pass by*, wherever we are.

Now, (1.) The condition of this poor man was very sad. He was *blind*, and had been so *from his birth.* If the light is sweet, how melancholy must it needs be for a man, all his days, *to eat in darkness!* He that is *blind* has no *enjoyment* of the light, but he that is *born blind* has no *idea* of it. Methinks such a one would give a great deal to have his curiosity satisfied with but one day's sight of light and colours, shapes and figures, though he were never to see them more. *Why is* the *light* of life *given to one that is in this misery*, that is deprived of the light of the sun, *whose way is* thus *hid, and whom God hath* thus *hedged in?* Job iii. 20—23. Let us bless God that it was not our case. The eye is one of the most curious parts of the body, its structure exceedingly nice and fine. In the formation of animals, it is said to be the first part that appears distinctly discernible. What a mercy is it that there was no miscarriage in the making of ours! Christ cured many that were blind by disease or accident, but here he cured one that was *born blind.* [1.] That he might give an instance of his power to help in the most desperate cases, and to relieve when none else can. [2.] That he might give a *specimen* of the work of his grace upon the souls of sinners, which gives sight to those that were by nature blind.

(2.) The compassions of our Lord Jesus towards him were very tender. He *saw him;* that is, he took cognizance of his case, and looked upon him with concern. When God is about to work deliverance, he is said to see *the affliction;* so Christ saw this poor man. Others saw him, but not as he did. This poor man could not see Christ, but Christ saw him, and anticipated both his prayers and expectations with a surprising cure. Christ is often found of those that seek him not, nor see him, Isa. lxv. 1. And, if we know or apprehend any thing of Christ, it is because we were first *known of him* (Gal. iv. 9), and *apprehended* by him, Phil. iii. 12.

II. The discourse between Christ and his disciples concerning this man. When he *departed out of the temple* they went along with him: for these were they that *continued with him in his temptations*, and followed him whithersoever he went; and they lost nothing by their adherence to him, but gained experience abundantly. Observe,

1. The question which the disciples put to their Master upon this blind man's case, *v.* 2. When Christ looked upon him, they had an eye to him too; Christ's compassion should kindle ours. It is probable that Christ told them this poor man was born blind, or they knew it by common fame; but they did not move Christ to heal him. Instead of this, they started a very odd question concerning him: *Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?* Now this question of theirs was,

(1.) *Uncharitably censorious.* They take it for granted that this extraordinary calamity was the punishment of some uncommon wickedness, and that this man was a sinner above all men that dwelt at Jerusalem, Luke xiii. 4. For the *barbarous people* to infer, *Surely this man is a murderer*, was not so strange; but it was *inexcusable* in them, who knew the scriptures, who had read that *all things come alike to all*, and knew that it was adjudged in Job's case that the greatest sufferers are not *therefore* to be looked upon as the greatest sinners. The grace of repentance calls our own afflictions *punishments*, but the grace of charity calls the afflictions of others *trials*, unless the contrary is very evident.

(2.) It was *unnecessarily curious.* Concluding this calamity to be inflicted for some very heinous crime, they ask, *Who were the criminals, this man or his parents?* And what was this to them? Or what good would it do them to know it? We are apt to be more inquisitive concerning other people's sins than concerning our own; whereas, it is more our concern to know wherefore God contends with us than wherefore he contends with others; for to judge ourselves is our duty, but to judge our brother is our sin. They enquire, [1.] Whether this man was punished thus for some sin of his own, either committed or foreseen before his birth. Some think that the disciples were tainted with the Pythagorean notion of the *pre-existence* of souls, and their *transmigration* from one body to another. Was this man's soul condemned to the dungeon of this blind body to punish it for some great sin committed in another body which it had before animated? The Pharisees seem to have had the same opinion of his case when they said, *Thou wast altogether born in sin* (*v.* 34), as if all those, and those only, were born in sin whom nature had *stigmatized.* Or, [2.] Whether he was punished for the wickedness of his parents, which God sometimes *visits upon the children.* It is a good reason why parents should take heed of sin, lest their children smart for it when they are gone. Let not us thus be cruel to our own, as the *ostrich in the wilderness.* Perhaps the disciples asked this, not as believing that this was the punishment of some actual sin of his own or his parents, but Christ having intimated to another patient that his sin was the cause of his impotency (*ch.* v. 14), "Master," say they, "whose sin is the cause of this impotency?" Being at a loss what construction to put upon this providence, they desire to be informed. The equity of God's dispensations is always certain, for *his righteousness is as the great mountains*, but not always to be accounted for, for his *judgments are a great deep.*

2. Christ's answer to this question. He was always *apt to teach*, and to rectify his disciples' mistakes.

(1.) He gives the reason of this poor man's blindness: "*Neither has this man sinned nor his parents*, but he was born blind, and has continued so to this day, that now at last *the works of God should be made manifest in him*," *v.* 3. Here Christ, who perfectly knew the secret springs of the divine counsels, told them two things concerning such uncommon calamities:—[1.] That they are not always inflicted as punishments of sin. The sinfulness of the whole race of mankind does indeed justify God in all the miseries of human life; so that those who have the least share of them must say that God is *kind*, and those who have the largest share must not say that he is *unjust*; but many are made much more *miserable* than others in this life who are not at all more *sinful.* Not but that this man was a sinner, and his parents sinners, but it was not any uncommon guilt that God had an eye to in inflicting this upon him. Note, We must take heed of judging any to be great sinners merely because they are great sufferers, lest we be found, not only *persecuting those whom God has smitten* (Ps. lxix. 26), but accusing those whom he has justified, and *condemning* those for whom *Christ died*, which is daring and dangerous, Rom. viii. 33, 34. [2.] That they are sometimes intended purely *for the glory of God*, and the *manifesting of his works.* God has a sovereignty over all his creatures and an exclusive right in them, and may make them serviceable to his glory in such a way as he thinks fit, in doing or suffering; and if God be glorified, either by us or in us, we were not made *in vain.* This man was *born blind*, and it was worth while for him to be so, and to continue thus long dark, *that the works of God might be manifest in him.* That is, *First*, That the *attributes of God* might be made manifest in him: his justice in making sinful man liable to such grievous calamities; his ordinary power and goodness in supporting a poor man under such a grievous and tedious affliction, especially that his extraordinary power and goodness might be manifested in curing him. Note, The difficulties of providence, otherwise unaccountable, may be resolved into his

—God intends in them to *show himself*, to declare his glory, to make himself to be taken notice of. Those who regard him not in the ordinary course of things are sometimes alarmed by things extraordinary. How contentedly then may a good man be a *loser in his comforts*, while he is sure that thereby God will be one way or other a *gainer in his glory!* *Secondly*, That the counsels of God concerning the Redeemer might be manifested in him. He was *born blind* that our Lord Jesus might have the honour of *curing him*, and might therein prove himself sent of God to be the true light to the world. Thus the fall of man was permitted, and the *blindness* that followed it, that the works of God might be manifest in *opening the eyes of the blind*. It was now a great while since this man was born blind, and yet it never appeared till now *why* he was so. Note, The intentions of Providence commonly do not appear till a great while after the event, perhaps *many years* after. The sentences in the book of providence are sometimes *long*, and you must read a great way before you can apprehend the sense of them.

(2.) He gives the reason of his own forwardness and readiness to help and heal him. *v.* 4, 5. It was not for ostentation, but in pursuance of his undertaking: *I must work the works of him that sent me* (of which this is one), *while it is day*, and working time; *the night cometh*, the period of that day, *when no man can work*. This is not only a reason why Christ was constant in doing good to the souls and bodies of men, but why particularly he did this, though it was the sabbath day, on which works of necessity might be done, and he proves this to be a work of necessity.

[1.] It was his Father's will: *I must work the works of him that sent me*. Note, *First*, The Father, when he sent his Son into the world, gave him *work to do;* he did not come into the world to take state, but to do business; whom God sends he employs, for he sends none to be idle. *Secondly*, The works Christ had to do were the *works of him that sent him*, not only appointed *by him*, but done *for him;* he was a worker together with God. *Thirdly*, He was pleased to lay himself under the strongest obligations to do the business he was sent about: I *must work*. He *engaged his heart*, in the covenant of redemption, to *draw near*, and *approach* to God as Mediator, Jer. xxx. 21. Shall we be willing to be *loose*, when Christ was willing to be *bound?* *Fourthly*, Christ, having laid himself under obligations to do his work, laid out himself with the utmost vigour and industry in his work. He *worked the works* he had to do; did ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα—*made a business of that which was his business*. It is not enough to look at our work, and talk over it, but we must work it.

[2.] Now was his opportunity: I must work *while it is day*, while the time lasts which is appointed to work in, and while the light lasts which is given to work by. Christ himself had *his day*. *First*, All the business of the *mediatorial kingdom* was to be done within the limits of time, and in this world; for at the end of the world, when time shall be no more, the *kingdom shall be delivered up to God, even the Father*, and the *mystery of God finished*. *Secondly*, All the work he had to do *in his own person* here on earth was to be done *before his death;* the time of his living in this world is *the day* here spoken of. Note, The time of our life is our day, in which it concerns us to do the *work of the day*. Day-time is the proper season for work (Ps. civ. 22, 23); during the day of life we must be busy, not waste *day-time*, nor play by *day-light;* it will be time enough to rest when our day is done, for it is *but a day*.

[3.] The period of his opportunity was at hand, and therefore he would be busy: *The night comes when no man can work*. Note, The consideration of our death approaching should quicken us to improve all the opportunities of life, both for doing and getting good. *The night comes*, it will come certainly, may come suddenly, is coming nearer and nearer. We cannot compute how nigh our sun is, it may go down at noon; nor can we promise ourselves a twilight between the day of life and the night of death. When the night comes we *cannot work*, because the light afforded us to work by is *extinguished;* the grave is a land of darkness, and our work cannot be done *in the dark*. And, besides, our time allotted us for our work will then have *expired;* when our Master tied us to duty he tied us to time too; when night comes, *call the labourers;* we must then *show our work*, and receive according to the things done. In the world of retribution we are no longer probationers; it is too late to *bid* when the inch of candle is *dropped*. Christ uses this as an argument with himself to be diligent, though he had no opposition from within to struggle with; much more need have we to work upon our hearts these and the like considerations to quicken us.

[4.] His business in the world was to enlighten it (*v.* 5): *As long as I am in the world*, and that will not be long, *I am the light of the world*. He had said this before, *ch.* viii. 12. He is the *Sun of righteousness*, that has not only light in his wings for those that can see, but healing in his wings, or beams, for those that are blind and cannot see, therein far exceeding in virtue that great light which rules *by day*. Christ would cure this blind man, the representative of a blind world, because he came to be *the light of the world*, not only to give *light*, but to give *sight*. Now this gives us, *First*, A great *encouragement* to come to him, as a guiding, quickening, refreshing light. To whom should we look but to him? Which way should we turn our eyes, but to the light? We partake of the sun's light, and so we may of Christ's grace, without money and without price. *Secondly*, A good *example* of usefulness in the

world. What Christ saith of himself, he saith of his disciples: *You are lights in the world*, and, if so, *Let your light shine.* What were candles made for but to burn?

III. The manner of the cure of the blind man, *v.* 6,7. The circumstances of the miracle are singular, and no doubt significant. *When he had thus spoken* for the instruction of his disciples, and the opening of their understandings, he addressed himself to the opening of the blind man's eyes. He did not defer it till he could do it either more privately, for his greater safety, or more publicly, for his greater honour, or till the sabbath was past, when it would give less offence. What good we have opportunity of doing we should do quickly; he that will never do a good work till there is nothing to be objected against it will leave many a good work for ever undone, Eccl. xi. 4. In the cure observe,

1. The preparation of the eye-salve. Christ *spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle.* He could have cured him with a word, as he did others, but he chose to do it in this way to show that he is not *tied* to any method. He made clay of his own spittle, because there was no water near; and he would teach us not to be nice or curious, but, when we have at any time occasion, to be willing to take up with that which is *next hand*, if it will but serve the turn. Why should we *go about* for that which may as well be had and done a *nearer way?* Christ's making use of his own spittle intimates that there is healing virtue in every thing that belongs to Christ; clay made of Christ's spittle was much more precious than the balm of Gilead.

2. The application of it to the place: *He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.* Or, as the margin reads it, *He spread* (ἐπέχρισε), *he daubed the clay upon the eyes of the blind man*, like a tender physician; he did it himself with his own hand, though the patient was a beggar. Now Christ did this, (1.) To magnify his power in making a blind man to see by that method which one would think more likely to make a seeing man blind. Daubing clay on the eyes would *close them* up, but never *open them.* Note, The power of God often works by contraries; and he makes men feel their own blindness before he gives them sight. (2.) To give an intimation that it was his mighty hand, the very same that at first made man out of *the clay;* for by him God *made the worlds*, both the great world, and man the little world. Man was *formed out of the clay*, and moulded like the clay, and here Christ used the same materials to give sight to the body that at first he used to give being to it. (3.) To represent and typify the healing and opening of the eyes of the mind by the grace of Jesus Christ. The design of the gospel is to *open men's eyes*, Acts, xxvi. 18. Now the eye-salve that does the work is of Christ's preparing; it is made up, not as this, of his spittle, but of his blood, the blood and water that came out of his pierced side; we must come to Christ for *the eye-salve*, Rev. iii. 18. He only is *able*, and he only is *appointed*, to make it up, Luke iv. 18. The means used in this work are very weak and unlikely, and are made effectual only by the power of Christ; when a dark world was to be enlightened, and nations of blind souls were to have their eyes opened, God chose the *foolish things, and weak, and despised*, for the doing of it. And the method Christ takes is first to make men feel themselves blind, as this poor man did whose eyes were daubed with clay, and then to give them sight. Paul in his conversion was *struck blind* for three days, and then the *scales fell from his eyes.* The way prescribed for getting spiritual wisdom is, *Let a man become a fool, that he may be wise*, 1 Cor. iii. 18. We must be made uneasy with our blindness, as this man here, and then healed.

3. The directions given to the patient, *v.* 7. His physician said to him, *Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.* Not that this washing was needful to effect the cure; but, (1.) Christ would hereby try his obedience, and whether he would with an implicit faith obey the orders of one he was so much a stranger to. (2.) He would likewise try how he stood affected to the tradition of the elders, which taught, and perhaps had taught him (for many that are *blind* are very knowing), that it was not lawful to wash the eyes, no not with spittle medicinally, on the sabbath day, much less to go to a pool of water to wash them. (3.) He would hereby represent the method of spiritual healing, in which, though the effect is owing purely to his power and grace, there is duty to be done by us. Go, search the scriptures, attend upon the ministry, converse with the wise; this is like washing in the pool of Siloam. Promised graces must be expected in the way of instituted ordinances. The waters of baptism were to those who had been trained up in darkness like the pool of Siloam, in which they might not only wash and be clean, but *wash, and have their eyes opened.* Hence they that were baptized are said to be φωτισθεντες—*enlightened;* and the ancients called baptism φωτισμὸς—*illumination.* Concerning the pool of Siloam observe, [1.] That it was supplied with water from mount Zion, so that these were the *waters of the sanctuary* (Ps. xlvi. 4), living waters, which were *healing*, Ezek. xlvii. 9. [2.] That the waters of Siloam had of old signified the throne and kingdom of the house of David, pointing at the Messiah (Isa. viii. 6), and the Jews who *refused the waters of Shiloa*, Christ's doctrine and law, and rejoiced in the tradition of the elders. Christ would try this man, whether he would cleave to the waters of Siloam or no. [3.] The evangelist takes notice of the signification of the name, its being interpreted *sent.* Christ is often called the *sent of God*, the Messenger of the covenant (Mal. iii. 1);

so that when Christ sent him to the pool of Siloam he did in effect send him to himself; for Christ is *all in all* to the healing of souls. Christ as a prophet directs us to himself as a priest *Go, wash in the fountain opened,* a fountain of life, not a *pool.*

4. The patient's obedience to these directions: *He went his way therefore,* probably led by some friend or other; or perhaps he was so well acquainted with Jerusalem that he could find the way himself. Nature often supplies the want of sight with an uncommon sagacity; and *he washed his eyes;* probably the disciples, or some stander by, informed him that he who bade him do it was that Jesus whom he had heard so much of, else he would not have gone, at his bidding, on that which looked so much like a fool's errand; in confidence of Christ's power, as well as in obedience to his command, he went, and washed.

5. The cure effected: *He came seeing.* There is more glory in this concise narrative, *He went* and *washed,* and *came seeing,* than in Cæsar's *Veni, vidi, vici—I came, I saw, I conquered.* When the clay was *washed off* from his eyes, all the other impediments were removed with it; so when the pangs and struggles of the new birth are over, and the pains and terrors of conviction past, the bands of sin fly off with them, and a glorious light and liberty succeed. See here an instance, (1.) Of the power of Christ. What cannot *he* do who could not only do *this,* but do it *thus?* With a lump of clay laid on either eye, and washed off again, he couched those cataracts immediately which the most skilful oculist, with the finest instrument and the most curious hand, could not remove. No doubt this is *he that should come,* for by him the blind receive their sight. (2.) It is an instance of the virtue of faith and obedience. This man let Christ do what *he* pleased, and did what he appointed him to do, and so was cured. Those that would be healed by Christ must be ruled by him. He *came back* from the pool to his neighbours and acquaintance, wondering and wondered at; he came *seeing.* This represents the benefit gracious souls find in attending on instituted ordinances, according to Christ's appointment; they have gone to the pool of Siloam weak, and have come away strengthened; have gone doubting, and come away satisfied; have gone mourning, and come away rejoicing; have gone trembling, and come away triumphing; have gone *blind,* and come away *seeing,* come away singing, Isa. lii. 8.

8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? 9 Some said, This is he: others *said,* He is like him: *but* he said, I am *he.* 10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? 11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus, made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. 12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

Such a wonderful event as the giving of sight to a man born blind could not but be the talk of the town, and many heeded it no more than they do other town-talk, that is but nine days' wonder; but here we are told what the neighbours said of it, for the confirmation of the matter of fact. That which at first was not believed without *scrutiny* may afterwards be admitted without *scruple.* Two things are debated in this conference about it:—

I. Whether this was the same man that had before been blind, *v.* 8.

1. The neighbours that lived near the place where he was born and bred, and knew that he had been blind, could not but be amazed when they saw that he had his eye-sight, had it on a sudden, and perfectly; and they said, *Is not this he that sat and begged?* It seems, this blind man was a common beggar, being disabled to work for his living; and so discharged from the obligation of the law, that if *any would not work, neither should he eat.* When he could not go about, he *sat;* if we cannot *work* for God, we must *sit still* quietly for him. When he could not labour, his parents not being able to maintain him, he *begged.* Note, Those who cannot otherwise subsist must not, like the unjust steward, be *ashamed to beg;* let no man be ashamed of any thing but sin. There are some common beggars that are objects of charity, that should be distinguished; and we must not let the bees starve for the sake of the drones or wasps that are among them. As to this man, (1.) It was well ordered by Providence that he on whom this miracle was wrought should be a common beggar, and so generally known and remarkable, by which means the truth of the miracle was the better attested, and there were more to witness against those infidel Jews who would not believe *that he had been blind* than if he had been maintained in his father's house. (2.) It was the greater instance of Christ's condescension that he seemed (as I may say) to take more pains about the cure of a common beggar than of others. When it was for the advantage of his miracles that they should be wrought on those that were remarkable, he pitched upon those that were made so by their poverty and misery, not by their dignity.

2. In answer to this enquiry, (1.) Some said, *This is he,* the very same man; and these are witnesses to the truth of the miracle, for they had long known him stone-blind. (2.) Others, who could not think it possible

that a man born blind should thus on a sudden receive his sight, for that reason, and no other, said, *He is not he, but is like him*, and so, by their confession, if it be he, it is a great miracle that is wrought upon him. Hence we may take occasion to think, [1.] Of the wisdom and power of Providence in ordering such a universal variety of the faces of men and women, so that no two are so alike but that they may be distinguished, which is necessary to society, and commerce, and the administration of justice. And, [2.] Of the wonderful change which the converting grace of God makes upon some who before were very wicked and vile, but are thereby so universally and visibly altered that one would not take them to be the same persons.

3. This controversy was soon decided by the man himself: *He said, I am he*, the very man that so lately sat and begged; "I am he that was blind, and was an object of the charity of men, but now see, and am a monument of the mercy and grace of God." We do not find that the neighbours appealed to him in this matter, but he, hearing the debate, interposed, and put an end to it. It is a piece of justice we owe to our neighbours to rectify their mistakes, and to set things before them, as far as we are able, in a true light. Applying it spiritually, it teaches us that those who are savingly enlightened by the grace of God should be ready to own what they were before that blessed change was wrought, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14.

II. How he came to have his eyes opened, *v.* 10—12. They will now turn aside, and *see this great sight*, and enquire further concerning it. He did not *sound a trumpet* when he did these alms, nor perform his cures *upon a stage;* and yet, like a city upon a hill, they could not be hid. Two things these neighbours enquire after:—

1. The manner of the cure: *How were thine eyes opened?* The works of the Lord being great, they ought to be *sought out*, Ps. cxi. 2. It is good to observe the way and method of God's works, and they will appear the more wonderful. We may apply it spiritually; it is strange that blind eyes should be opened, but more strange when we consider how they are opened; how weak the means are that are used, and how strong the opposition that is conquered. In answer to this enquiry the poor man gives them a plain and full account of the matter: *A man that is called Jesus made clay,—and I received sight. v.* 11. Note, Those who have experienced special instances of God's power and goodness, in temporal or spiritual things, should be ready upon all occasions to communicate their experiences, for the glory of God and the instruction and encouragement of others. See David's collection of his experiences, his own and others', Ps. xxxiv. 4—6. It is a debt we owe to our benefactor, and to our brethren. God's favours are lost *upon* us, when they are lost *with us*, and go no further.

2. The author of it (*v.* 12): *Where is he?* Some perhaps asked this question out of curiosity. "Where is he, that we may see him?" A man that did such cures as these might well be a show, which one would go a good way for the sight of. Others, perhaps, asked out of ill-will. "Where is he, that we may *seize* him?" There was a proclamation out for the discovering and apprehending of him (*ch.* xi. 57); and the unthinking crowd, in spite of all reason and equity, will have ill thoughts of those that are put into an ill name. Some, we hope, asked this question out of *good-will*. "Where is he, that we may be acquainted with him? Where is he, that we may come to him, and share in the favours he is so free of?" In answer to this, he could say nothing: *I know not.* As soon as Christ had sent him to the pool of Siloam, it should seem, he withdrew immediately (as he did, *ch.* v. 13), and did not stay till the man returned, as if he either doubted of the effect or waited for the man's thanks. Humble souls take more pleasure in *doing good* than in hearing of it again; it will be time enough to hear of it in the *resurrection of the just.* The man had never seen Jesus, for by the time that he had gained his sight he had lost his Physician; and he asked, it is probable, *Where is he?* None of all the new and surprising objects that presented themselves could be so grateful to him as one sight of Christ, but as yet he knew no more of him than that he was called, and rightly called, *Jesus—a Saviour.* Thus in the work of grace wrought upon the soul we see the change, but see not the hand that makes it; for the way of the Spirit is like that of the wind, which thou hearest the sound of, but canst not tell *whence it comes* nor *whither it goes.*

13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. 14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. 16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. 17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. 18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him

that had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? 20 His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. 22 These *words* spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. 24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. 25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner *or no*, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. 26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? 27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye also be his disciples? 28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. 29 We know that God spake unto Moses: *as for* this *fellow*, we know not from whence he is. 30 The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes. 31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. 32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. 34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

One would have expected that such a miracle as Christ wrought upon the blind man would have settled his reputation, and silenced and shamed all opposition, but it had the contrary effect; instead of being embraced as a prophet for it, he is prosecuted as a criminal.

I. Here is the information that was given in to the Pharisees concerning this matter: *They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind, v.* 13. They brought him to the great sanhedrim, which consisted chiefly of Pharisees, at least the Pharisees in the sanhedrim were most active against Christ. 1. Some think that those who brought this man to the Pharisees did it with a *good design*, to show them that this Jesus, whom they persecuted, was not what they represented him, but really a great man, and one that gave considerable proofs of a divine mission. What hath convinced us of the truth and excellency of religion, and hath removed our prejudices against it, we should be forward, as we have opportunity, to offer to others for their conviction. 2. It should seem, rather, that they did it with an *ill design*, to exasperate the Pharisees the more against Christ, and there was no need of this, for they were bitter enough of themselves. They brought him with such a suggestion as that in *ch.* xi. 47, 48, *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him.* Note, Those rulers that are of a persecuting spirit shall never want ill instruments about them, that will blow the coals, and make them worse.

II. The ground which was pretended for this information, and the colour given to it. That which is good was never maligned but under the imputation of something evil. And the crime objected here (*v.* 14) was that *it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.* The profanation of the sabbath day is certainly wicked, and gives a man a very ill character; but the traditions of the Jews had made that to be a violation of the law of the sabbath which was far from being so. Many a time this matter was contested between Christ and the Jews, that it might be settled for the benefit of the church in all ages. But it may be asked, "Why would Christ not only work miracles on the sabbath day, but work them in such a manner as he knew would give offence to the Jews? When he had healed the impotent man, why should he bid him carry his bed? Could he not have cured this blind man without making clay?" I answer, 1. He would not seem to yield to the usurped power of the scribes and Pharisees. Their government was illegal, their impositions were arbitrary, and their zeal for the rituals consumed the substantials of religion; and therefore Christ would not *give place* to them, *by subjection, no not for an hour.* Christ was made under the law of God, but not under their law. 2. He did it that he might, both by word and action, expound the law of the fourth commandment, and vindicate it from their corrupt glosses, and so teach us that a weekly sabbath is to be *perpetually* observed in the church, one

day in seven (for what need was there to explain that law, if it must be presently abrogated?) and that it is not to be so *ceremonially* observed by us as it was by the Jews? Works of necessity and mercy are allowed, and the sabbath-rest to be kept, not so much for its own sake as in order to the sabbath-work. 3. Christ chose to work his cures on the sabbath day to dignify and sanctify the day, and to intimate that spiritual cures should be wrought mostly on the Christian sabbath day. How many blind eyes have been opened by the preaching of the gospel, that blessed eye-salve, on the Lord's day! How many impotent souls cured on that day!

III. The trial and examination of this matter by the Pharisees, *v.* 15. So much passion, prejudice, and ill-humour, and so little reason, appear here, that the discourse is nothing but crossing questions. One would think, when a man in these circumstances was brought before them, they would have been so taken up in admiring the miracle, and congratulating the happiness of the poor man, that they could not have been peevish with him. But their enmity to Christ had divested them of all manner of humanity, and divinity too. Let us see how they teased this man.

1. They interrogated him concerning the cure itself.

(1.) They doubted whether he had indeed been *born blind*, and demanded proof of that which even the prosecutors had acknowledged (*v.* 18): They *did not believe*, that is, they would not, that he was *born blind*. Men that seek occasion to quarrel with the clearest truths may find it if they please; and they that resolve to *hold fast deceit* will never want a handle to hold it by. This was not a prudent caution, but a prejudiced infidelity. However, it was a good way that they took for the clearing of this: *They called the parents of the man who had received his sight.* This they did in hopes to disprove the miracle. These parents were poor and timorous, and if they had said that they could not be sure that this was their son, or that it was only some weakness or dimness in his sight that he had been born with, which if they had been able to get help for him might have been cured long since, or had otherwise prevaricated, for fear of the court, the Pharisees had gained their point, had robbed Christ of the honour of this miracle, which would have lessened the reputation of all the rest. But God so ordered and overruled this counsel of theirs that it turned to the more effectual proof of the miracle, and left them under a necessity of being either convinced or confounded. Now in this part of the examination we have,

[1.] The questions that were put to them (*v.* 19): They *asked them* in an imperious threatening way, "*Is this your son?* Dare you swear to it? *Do you say he was born blind?* Are you sure of it? Or did he but pretend to be so, to have an excuse for his begging? *How then doth he now see?* That is impossible, and therefore you had better unsay it." Those who cannot bear the light of truth do all they can to *eclipse* it, and hinder the discovery of it. Thus the *managers of evidence*, or mismanagers rather, lead witnesses out of the way, and teach them how to conceal or disguise the truth, and so involve themselves in a double guilt, like that of Jeroboam, who sinned, and made Israel to sin.

[2.] Their answers to these interrogatories, in which,

First, They fully attest that which they could safely say in this matter; *safely*, that is, upon their own knowledge, and *safely*, that is, without running themselves into a *premunire* (*v.* 20): *We know that this is our son* (for they were daily conversant with him, and had such a natural affection to him as the true mother had (1 Kings iii. 26), which made them know it was *their own)*; and we know that he was *born blind.* They had reason to know it, inasmuch as it had cost them many a sad thought, and many a careful troublesome hour, about him. How often had they looked upon him with grief, and lamented their child's blindness more than all the burdens and inconveniences of their poverty, and wished he had never been born, rather than be born to such an uncomfortable life! Those who are ashamed of their children, or any of their relations, because of their bodily infirmities, may take a reproof from *these* parents, who freely owned, This is *our son*, though he was *born blind*, and lived upon alms.

Secondly, They cautiously decline giving any evidence concerning his cure; partly because they were not themselves eye-witnesses of it, and could say nothing to it *of their own knowledge;* and partly because they found it was a *tender point*, and would not bear to be meddled with. And therefore, having owned that he was *their son* and was *born blind*, further these deponents say not.

a. Observe how warily they express themselves (*v.* 21): "*By what means he now seeth we know not*, or *who has opened his eyes we know not*, otherwise than by *hearsay;* we can give no account either by what means or by whose hand it was done." See how the wisdom of this world teaches men to *trim* the matter in critical junctures. Christ was accused as a sabbath-breaker, and as an impostor. Now these parents of the blind man, though they were not eye-witnesses of the cure, were yet fully assured of it, and were bound in gratitude to have borne their testimony to the honour of the Lord Jesus, who had done their son so great a kindness; but they had not courage to do it, and then thought it might serve to atone for their not appearing in favour of him that they said nothing to his prejudice; whereas, in the day of trial, he that is not *apparently* for Christ is justly looked upon as *really* against him, Luke xi. 23; Mark viii. 38. That they might not be further urged in this matter,

they refer themselves and the court to him: *He is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself.* This implies that while children are not of age (while they are *infants*, such as cannot speak) it is incumbent upon their parents to *speak for them*, speak to God for them in prayer, speak to the church for them in baptism; but, when they are of age, it is fit that they should be asked whether they be willing to stand to that which their parents did for them, and let them speak for themselves. This man, though he was *born blind*, seems to have been of quick understanding above many, which enabled him to speak for himself better than his friends could speak for him. Thus God often by a kind providence makes up in the mind what is wanting in the body, 1 Cor. xii. 23, 24. His parents' turning them over to him was only to save themselves from trouble, and expose him; whereas they that had so great an interest in his *mercies* had reason to embark with him in his *hazards* for the honour of that Jesus who had done so much for them.

b. See the reason why they were so cautious (*v.* 22, 23): *Because they feared the Jews.* It was not because they would put an honour upon their son, by making him his own advocate, or because they would have the matter cleared by the *best hand*, but because they would shift trouble off from themselves, as most people are in care to do, no matter on whom they throw it. Near is my friend, and near is my child, and perhaps near is my religion, but *nearer is myself—Proximus egomet mihi.* But Christianity teaches another lesson, 1 Cor. x. 24; Esth. viii. 6. Here is,

(*a.*) The *late law* which the sanhedrim had made. It was agreed and enacted by their authority that, if any man within their jurisdiction did *confess* that Jesus *was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.* Observe,

[*a.*] The crime designed to be punished, and so prevented, by this statute, and that was embracing Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah, and manifesting this by any overt-act, which amounted to a confessing of him. They themselves did expect a Messiah, but they could by no means bear to think that this Jesus should be he, nor admit the question whether he were or no, for two reasons:—*First*, Because his precepts were all so contrary to their traditional *laws.* The spiritual worship he prescribed overthrew their formalities; nor did any thing more effectually destroy their singularity and narrow-spiritedness than that universal charity which he taught; humility and mortification, repentance and self-denial, were lessons new to them, and sounded harsh and strange in their ears. *Secondly*, Because his promises and appearances were so contrary to their traditional hopes. They expected a Messiah in outward pomp and splendour, that should not only free the nation from the Roman yoke, but advance the grandeur of the sanhedrim, and make all the members of it princes and peers: and now to hear of a Messiah whose outward circumstances were all mean and poor, whose first appearance and principal residence were in Galilee, a despised province, who never made his court to them, nor sought their favour, whose followers were neither sword-men nor gown-men, nor any men of honour, but contemptible fishermen, who proposed and promised no redemption but from sin, no consolation of Israel but what is spiritual and divine, and at the same time bade his followers expect the cross, and count upon persecution; this was such a reproach to all the ideas they had formed and filled the minds of their people with, such a blow to their power and interest, and such a disappointment to all their hopes, that they could never be reconciled to it, nor so much as give it a fair or patient hearing, but, right or wrong, it must be *crushed.*

[*b.*] The penalty to be inflicted for this crime. If any should own himself a disciple of Jesus, he should be deemed and taken as an apostate from the faith of the Jewish church, and a rebel and traitor against the government of it, and should therefore be *put out of the synagogue*, as one that had rendered himself unworthy of the honours, and incapable of the privileges, of their church; he should be excommunicated, and expelled the commonwealth of Israel. Nor was this merely an ecclesiastical censure, which a man that made no conscience of their authority might slight, but it was, in effect, an *outlawry*, which excluded a man from civil commerce and deprived him of his liberty and property. Note, *First*, Christ's holy religion, from its first rise, has been opposed by penal laws made against the professors of it; as if men's consciences would otherwise *naturally* embrace it, this unnatural force has been put upon them. *Secondly*, The church's artillery, when the command of it has fallen into ill hands, has often been turned against itself, and ecclesiastical censures have been made to serve a carnal secular interest. It is no new thing to see those cast out of the synagogue that were the greatest ornaments and blessings of it, and to hear those that expelled them say, *The Lord be glorified*, Isa. lxvi. 5. Now of this edict it is said, 1. That the Jews had agreed it, or *conspired* it. Their consultation and communion herein were a perfect conspiracy against the crown and dignity of the Redeemer, against the Lord and his Anointed. 2. That they had already agreed it. Though he had been but a few months in any public character among them, and, one would think, in so short a time could not have made them jealous of him, yet thus early were they aware of his growing interest, and already agreed to do their utmost to suppress it. He had lately made his escape out of the temple, and, when they saw themselves

baffled in their attempts to take him, they presently took this course, to make it penal for any body to own him. Thus unanimous and thus expeditious are the enemies of the church, and their counsels; but he that *sits in heaven laughs at them,* and *has them in derision,* and so may we.

(*b.*) The influence which this law had upon the parents of the blind man. They declined saying any thing of Christ, and shuffled it off to their son, *because they feared the Jews.* Christ had incurred the frowns of the government to do their son a kindness, but they would not incur them to do him any honour. Note, *The fear of man brings a snare* (Prov. xxix. 25), and often makes people deny and disown Christ, and his truths and ways, and act against their consciences. Well, the parents have thus disentangled themselves, and are discharged from any further attendance; let us now go on with the examination of the man himself; the doubt of the Pharisees, whether he was *born blind,* was put out of doubt *by them;* and therefore,

(2.) They enquired of *him* concerning the *manner of the cure,* and made their remarks upon it, *v.* 15, 16.

[1.] The same question which his neighbours had put to him *now again the Pharisees asked him, how he had received his sight.* This they enquired not with any sincere desire to find out the truth, by tracing the report to the original, but with a desire to find an occasion against Christ; for, if the man should relate the matter fully, they would prove Christ a sabbath-breaker; if he should vary from his former story, they would have some colour to suspect the whole to be a collusion.

[2.] The same answer, in effect, which he had before given to his neighbours, he here repeats to the Pharisees: *He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.* He does not here speak of the making of the clay, for indeed he had not seen it made. That circumstance was not essential, and might give the Pharisees most occasion against him, and therefore he waives it. In the former account he said, *I washed, and received sight;* but lest they should think it was only a glimpse for the present, which a heated imagination might fancy itself to have, he now says, "*I do see:* it is a complete and lasting cure."

[3.] The remarks made upon this story were very different, and occasioned a debate in the court, *v.* 16.

First, Some took this occasion to censure and condemn Christ for what he had done. Some of the Pharisees said, *This man is not of God,* as he pretends, *because he keepeth not the sabbath day.* 1. The doctrine upon which this censure is grounded is very true—that those *are not of God*—those pretenders to prophecy not *sent of God,* those pretenders to saintship not *born of God*—who do not *keep the sabbath day.* Those that are of God will *keep the commandments of God;* and this is his commandment, that we sanctify the sabbath. Those that are of God keep up communion with God, and delight to hear from him, and speak to him, and therefore will observe the sabbath, which is a day appointed for intercourse with heaven. The sabbath is called a *sign,* for the sanctifying of it is a sign of a sanctified heart, and the profaning of it a sign of a profane heart. But, 2. The application of it to our Saviour is very unjust, for he did religiously observe the sabbath day, and never in any instance violated it, never did otherwise than *well* on the sabbath day. He did not keep the sabbath according to the tradition of the elders and the superstitious observances of the Pharisees, but he kept it according to the command of God, and therefore, no doubt, he was of God, and his miracles proved him to be *Lord also of the sabbath day.* Note, much unrighteous and uncharitable judging is occasioned by men's making the rules of religion more strict than God has made them, and adding their own fancies to God's appointments, as the Jews here, in the case of sabbath-sanctification. We ourselves may forbear such and such things, on the sabbath day, as we find a distraction to us, and we do well, but we must not therefore tie up others to the same strictness. Every thing that we take for a rule of practice must not presently be made a rule of judgment.

Secondly, Others spoke in his favour, and very pertinently urged, *How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?* It seems that even in this *council of the ungodly* there were some that were capable of a *free thought,* and were witnesses for Christ, even in the midst of his enemies. The matter of fact was plain, that this was a true miracle, the more it was searched into the more it was cleared; and this brought his former similar works to mind, and gave occasion to speak magnificently of them, *τοιαῦτα σημεῖα—such great signs,* so many, so evident. And the inference from it is very natural: Such things as these could never be done by a *man that is a sinner,* that is, not by any mere man, in his own name, and by his own power; or, rather, not by one that is a cheat or an impostor, and in that sense a sinner; such a one may indeed show some *signs and lying wonders,* but not such signs and true wonders as Christ wrought. How could a man produce such divine credentials, if he had not a divine commission? Thus there was a *division among them,* a *schism,* so the word is; they clashed in their opinion, a warm debate arose, and the *house divided* upon it. Thus God defeats the counsels of his enemies by dividing them; and by such testimonies as these given against the malice of persecutors, and the rubs they meet with, their designs against the church are sometimes rendered ineffectual and always inexcusable.

2. After their enquiry concerning the cure, we must observe their enquiry concerning the *author* of it. And here observe,

(1.) What the man said of him, in answer to their enquiry. They ask him (*v.* 17), "*What sayest thou of him, seeing that he has opened thine eyes?* What dost thou think of his doing this? And what idea hast thou of him that did it?" If he should speak *slightly* of Christ, in answer to this, as he might be tempted to do, to please them, now that he was in their hands, as his parents had done —if he should say, "I know not what to make of him; he may be a conjuror for aught I know, or some mountebank"—they would have triumphed in it. Nothing confirms Christ's enemies in their enmity to him so much as the slights put upon him by those that have passed for his friends. But, if he should speak honourably of Christ, they would prosecute him upon their new law, which did not except, no, not his own patient; they would make him an example, and so deter others from applying to Christ for cures, for which, though they came cheap from Christ, yet they would make them pay dearly. Or perhaps Christ's friends proposed to have the man's own sentiments concerning his physician, and were willing to know, since he appeared to be a sensible man, what he thought of him. Note, Those whose eyes Christ has opened know best what to say of him, and have great reason, upon all occasions, to say well of him. What think we of Christ? To this question the poor man makes a short, plain, and direct answer: "*He is a prophet*, he is one inspired and sent of God to preach, and work miracles, and deliver to the world a divine message." There had been no prophets among the Jews for three hundred years; yet they did not conclude that they should have no more, for they knew that he was yet to come who should *seal up vision and prophecy*, Dan. ix. 24. It should seem, this man had not any thoughts that Christ was the Messiah, the great prophet, but one of the same rank with the other prophets. The woman of Samaria concluded he was *a prophet* before she had any thought of his being the Messiah (*ch.* iv. 19); so this blind man thought well of Christ according to the light he had, though he did not think well enough of him; but, being faithful in what he had already attained to, God revealed even *that* unto him. This poor blind beggar had a clearer judgment of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and saw further into the proofs of a divine mission, than the *masters in Israel*, that assumed an authority to judge of prophets.

(2.) What they said of him, in reply to the man's testimony. Having in vain attempted to invalidate the evidence of the fact, and finding that indeed a *notable miracle was wrought*, and they *could not deny it*, they renew their attempt to banter it, and run it down, and do all they can to shake the good opinion the man had of him that opened his eyes, and to convince him that Christ was a bad man (*v.* 24): *Give God the praise, we know that this man is a sinner.* Two ways this is understood: [1.] By way of *advice*, to take heed of ascribing the praise of his cure to a sinful man, but to give it all to God, to whom it was due. Thus, under colour of zeal for the honour of God, they rob Christ of his honour, as those do who will not worship Christ as God, under pretence of zeal for this great truth, that there is but one God to be worshipped; whereas this is his declared will, that all men should *honour the Son even as they honour the Father;* and in confessing that Christ is Lord we *give glory to God the Father.* When God makes use of men that are sinners as instruments of good to us, we must *give God the glory*, for every creature is that to us which he makes it to be; and yet there is gratitude owing to the instruments. It was a good word, *Give God the praise*, but here it was ill used; and there seems to be this further in it, "This man is *a sinner*, a *bad man*, and therefore give the praise so much the more to God, who could work by such an instrument." [2.] By way of *adjuration;* so some take it. "We know (though thou dost not, who hast but lately come, as it were, into a new world) that this man is *a sinner*, a great impostor, that cheats the country; this we are sure of, therefore *give God praise*" (as Joshua said to Achan) "by making an ingenuous confession of the fraud and collusion which we are confident there is in this matter; in God's name, man, tell the truth." Thus is God's name abused in papal inquisitions, when by oaths, *ex officio*, they extort accusations of *themselves* from the *innocent*, and of *others* from the *ignorant.* See how basely they speak of the Lord Jesus: *We know that this man is a sinner*, is a man of sin. In which we may observe, *First*, Their insolence and pride. They would not have it thought, when they asked the man what he thought of him, that they needed information; nay, they know very well that he is a sinner, and nobody can convince them of the contrary. He had challenged them to their faces (*ch.* viii. 46) to *convince him of sin*, and they had nothing to say; but now behind his back they speak of him as a malefactor, convicted upon the notorious evidence of the fact. Thus false accusers make up in confidence what is wanting in proof. *Secondly*, The injury and indignity hereby done to the Lord Jesus. When he became man, he took upon him the form not only of a *servant*, but of a *sinner* (Rom. viii. 3), and passed for a sinner in common with the rest of mankind. Nay, he was represented as a sinner of the first magnitude, a sinner above all men; and, being *made sin for us*, he despised even this shame.

3. The debate that arose between the Pharisees and this poor man concerning Christ. They say, *He is a sinner;* he says, *He is a*

prophet. As it is an encouragement to those who are concerned for the cause of Christ to hope that it shall never be lost for want of witnesses, when they find a poor blind beggar picked up from the way-side, and made a witness for Christ, to the faces of his most impudent enemies; so it is an encouragement to those who are called out to witness for Christ to find with what prudence and courage this man managed his defence, according to the promise, *It shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak.* Though he had never seen Jesus, he had felt his grace. Now in the parley between the Pharisees and this poor man we may observe three steps:—

(1.) He sticks to the certain matter of fact the evidence of which they endeavour to shake. That which is doubtful is best resolved into that which is plain, and therefore, [1.] He adheres to that which to himself at least, and to his own satisfaction, was past dispute (*v.* 25): "*Whether he be a sinner or no I know not,* I will not now stand to dispute, nor need I, the matter is plain, and though I should altogether hold my peace would speak for itself;" or, as it might better be rendered, "*If he be a sinner, I know it not,* I see no reason to say so, but the contrary; for this *one thing I know,* and can be more sure of than you can be of that of which you are so confident, *that whereas I was blind, now I see,* and therefore must not only say that he has been a good friend to me, but that he is a *prophet;* I am both able and bound to speak well of him." Now here, *First,* He tacitly reproves their great assurance of the ill character they gave of the blessed Jesus: "You say that you *know* him to be a *sinner;* I, who know him as well as you do, cannot give him any such character." *Secondly,* He boldly relies upon his own experience of the power and goodness of the holy Jesus, and resolves to abide by it. There is no disputing against experience, nor arguing a man out of his senses; here is one that is properly an eye-witness of the power and grace of Christ, though he had never seen him. Note, As Christ's mercies are most valued by those that have felt the want of them, that have been blind and now see, so the most powerful and durable affections to Christ are those that arise from an experimental knowledge of him, 1 John i. 1; Acts iv. 20. The poor man does not here give a nice account of the method of the cure, nor pretend to describe it *philosophically,* but in short, *Whereas I was blind, now I see.* Thus in the work of grace in the soul, though we cannot tell when and how, by what instruments and by what steps and advances, the blessed change was wrought, yet we may take the comfort of it if we can say, through grace, "*Whereas I was blind, now I see.* I did live a carnal, worldly, sensual life, but, thanks be to God, it is now otherwise with me," Eph. v. 8. [2.] They endeavour to baffle and stifle the evidence by a needless repetition of their enquiries into it (*v.* 26): *What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes?* They asked these questions, *First,* Because they wanted something to say, and would rather speak *impertinently* than seem to be silenced or run a-ground. Thus eager disputants, that resolve they will have the last word, by such vain repetitions, to avoid the shame of being silenced, make themselves accountable for many idle words. *Secondly,* Because they hoped, by putting the man upon repeating his evidence, to catch him tripping in it, or wavering, and then they would think they had gained a good point.

(2.) He upbraids them with their obstinate infidelity and invincible prejudices, and they revile him as a disciple of Jesus, *v.* 27—29, where the man is more bold with them and they are more sharp upon him than before.

[1.] The man boldly upbraids them with their wilful and unreasonable opposition to the evidence of this miracle, *v.* 27. He would not gratify them with a repetition of the story, but bravely replied, *I have told you already, and you did not hear, wherefore would you hear it again, will you also be his disciples?* Some think that he spoke *seriously,* and really expecting that they would be convinced. "He has many disciples, I will be one, will you also come in among them?" Some zealous young Christians see so much reason for religion that they are ready to think every one will presently be of their mind. But it rather seems to be spoken *ironically:* "*Will you be his disciples?* No, I know you abhor the thoughts of it; why then should you desire to hear that which will either make you his disciples or leave you inexcusable if you be not?" Those that wilfully shut their eyes against the light, as these Pharisees here did, *First,* Make themselves contemptible and base, as these here did, who were justly exposed by this poor man for denying the conclusion, when they had nothing to object against either of the premises. *Secondly,* They forfeit all the benefit of further instructions and means of knowledge and conviction: they that have been told once, and *would not hear,* why should they be told it again? Jer. li. 9. See Matt. x. 14. *Thirdly,* They hereby *receive the grace of God in vain.* This is implied in that, "*Will you be his disciples?* No, you resolve you will not; why then would you hear it again, only that you may be his accusers and persecutors?" Those who will not see cause to embrace Christ, and join with his followers, yet, one would think, should see cause enough not to hate and persecute him and them.

[2.] For this they scorn and revile him, *v.* 28. When they could not resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke, they broke out into a passion, and scolded him, began to call names, and give him ill language. See what Christ's faithful witnessess must expect from the adversaries of his truth and cause;

let them count upon *all manner of evil* to be said of them, Matt. v. 11. The method commonly taken by unreasonable man is to make out with railing what is wanting in truth and reason.

First, They taunted this man for his affection to Christ; they said, *Thou art his disciple*, as if that were reproach enough, and they could not say worse of him. "We scorn to be his disciples, and will leave that preferment to thee, and such scoundrels as thou art." They do what they can to put Christ's religion in an ill name, and to represent the profession of it as a contemptible scandalous thing. They *reviled him.* The Vulgate reads it, *maledixerunt eum—they cursed him;* and what was their curse? It was this, *Be thou his disciple.* "May such a curse" (saith St. Austin here) "ever be on us and on our children!" If we take our measures of credit and disgrace from the sentiment or rather clamours of a blind deluded world, we shall *glory in our shame*, and be *ashamed of our glory.* They had no reason to call this man a *disciple of* Christ, he had neither seen him nor heard him preach, only he had spoken favourably of a kindness Christ had done him, and this they could not bear.

Secondly, They gloried in their relation to Moses as their Master: "*We are Moses's disciples*, and do not either need or desire any other teacher." Note, 1. Carnal professors of religion are very apt to trust to, and be proud of, the dignities and privileges of their profession, while they are strangers to the principles and powers of their religion. These Pharisees had before boasted of their good parentage: *We are Abraham's seed;* here they boast of their good education, *We are Moses's disciples;* as if these would save them. 2. It is sad to see how much one part of religion is opposed, under colour of zeal for another part. There was a perfect harmony between Christ and Moses; Moses prepared for Christ, and Christ perfected Moses, so that they might be disciples of Moses, and become the disciples of Christ too; and yet they here put them in opposition, nor could they have persecuted Christ but under the shelter of the abused name of Moses. Thus those who gainsay the doctrine of free grace value themselves as promoters of man's duty, *We are Moses's disciples;* while, on the other hand, those that cancel the obligation of the law value themselves as the assertors of free grace, and as if none were the disciples of Jesus but they; whereas, if we rightly understand the matter, we shall see God's grace and man's duty meet together and kiss and befriend each other.

Thirdly, They gave some sort of reason for their adhering to Moses against Christ (*v.* 29): *We know that God spoke unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not whence he is.* But did they not know that among other things which God spoke unto Moses this was one, that they must expect another prophet, and a further revelation of the mind of God? yet, when our Lord Jesus, pursuant to what God said to Moses, did appear, and gave sufficient proofs of his being that prophet, under pretence of sticking to the old religion, and the established church, they not only forfeited, but forsook, their own mercies. In this argument of theirs observe, 1. How impertinently they allege, in defence of their enmity to Christ, that which none of his followers ever denied: *We know that God spoke unto Moses*, and, thanks be to God, we know it too, more plainly to Moses than to any other of the prophets; but what then? God spoke to Moses, and does it therefore follow that Jesus is an impostor? Moses was a prophet, it is true, and might not Jesus be a prophet also? Moses spoke honourably of Jesus (*ch.* v. 46), and Jesus spoke honourably of Moses (Luke xvi. 29); they were both faithful in the same house of God, Moses as a servant, Christ as a Son; therefore their pleading Moses' divine warrant in opposition to Christ's was an artifice, to make unthinking people believe it was as certain that Jesus was a false prophet as that Moses was a true one; whereas they were both true. 2. How absurdly they urge their ignorance of Christ as a reason to justify their contempt of him: *As for this fellow.* Thus scornfully do they speak of the blessed Jesus, as if they did not think it worth while to charge their memories with a name so inconsiderable; they express themselves with as much disdain of the Shepherd of Israel as if he had not been worthy to be *set with the dogs of their flock: As for this fellow*, this sorry fellow, *we know not whence he is.* They looked upon themselves to have the key of knowledge, that none must preach without a license first had and obtained from them, under the seal of their court. They expected that all who set up for teachers should apply to them, and give them satisfaction, which this Jesus had never done, never so far owned their power as to ask their leave, and therefore they concluded him an intruder, and one that came not in by the door: *They knew not whence* nor what *he was*, and therefore concluded him a *sinner;* whereas those we know little of we should judge charitably of; but proud and narrow souls will think none good but themselves, and those that are in their interest. It was not long ago that the Jews had made the contrary to this an objection against Christ (*ch.* vii. 27): *We know this man whence he is, but when Christ comes no man knows whence he is.* Thus they could with the greatest assurance either affirm or deny the same thing, according as they saw it would serve their turn. They *knew not whence he was;* and whose fault was that? (1.) It is certain that they ought to have enquired. The Messiah was to appear about this time, and it concerned them to look about them, and examine every indication; but these priests, like those, Jer. ii. 6, *said not, Where*

is the Lord? (2.) It is certain that they might have known whence he was, might not only have known, by searching the register, that he was born in Bethlehem; but by enquiring into his doctrine, miracles, and conversation, they might have known that he was sent of God, and had better orders, a better commission, and far better instructions, than any they could give him. See the absurdity of infidelity. Men will not know the doctrine of Christ because they are resolved they will not believe it, and then pretend they do not believe it because they do not know it. Such ignorance and unbelief, which support one another, aggravate one another.

(3.) He reasons with them concerning this matter, and they excommunicate him.

[1.] The poor man, finding that he had reason on his side, which they could not answer, grows more bold, and, in prosecution of his argument, is very close upon them.

First, He wonders at their obstinate infidelity (*v.* 30); not at all daunted by their frowns, nor shaken by their confidence, he bravely answered, "*Why, herein is a marvellous thing*, the strangest instance of wilful ignorance that ever was heard of among men that pretend to sense, that *you know not whence he is*, and yet he has opened mine eyes." Two things he wonders at:—1. That they should be strangers to a man so *famous*. He that could open the eyes of the blind must certainly be a considerable man, and worth taking notice of. The Pharisees were inquisitive men, had a large correspondence and acquaintance, thought themselves the eyes of the church and its watchmen, and yet that they should talk as if they thought it below them to take cognizance of such a man as this, and have conversation with him, this is a strange thing indeed. There are many who pass for learned and knowing men, who understand business, and can talk sensibly in other things, who yet are ignorant, to a wonder, of the doctrine of Christ, who have no concern, no, not so much as a curiosity, to acquaint themselves with that which the *angels desire to look into*. 2. That they should question the divine mission of one that had undoubtedly wrought a divine miracle. When they said, *We know not whence he is*, they meant, "We know not any proof that his doctrine and ministry are from heaven." "Now this is strange," saith the poor man, "that the miracle wrought upon me has not convinced you, and put the matter out of doubt,—that you, whose education and studies give you advantages above others of discerning the things of God, should thus shut your eyes against the light." It is a *marvellous work and a wonder, when the wisdom of the wise thus perisheth* (Isa. xxix. 14), that they deny the truth of that of which they cannot gainsay the evidence. Note, (1.) The unbelief of those who enjoy the means of knowledge and conviction is indeed a marvellous thing, Mark vi. 6. (2.) Those who have themselves experienced the power and grace of the Lord Jesus do especially wonder at the wilfulness of those who reject him, and, having such good thoughts of him themselves, are amazed that others have not. Had Christ opened the eyes of the Pharisees, they would not have doubted his being a prophet.

Secondly, He argues strongly against them, *v.* 31—33. They had determined concerning Jesus that he was not of God (*v.* 16), but was a *sinner* (*v.* 24), in answer to which the man here proves not only that he was *not a sinner* (*v.* 31), but that he was *of God*, *v.* 33.

a. He argues here, (*a.*) With great knowledge. Though he could not read a letter of the book, he was well acquainted with the scripture and the things of God; he had wanted the sense of seeing, yet had well improved that of hearing, by which faith cometh; yet this would not have served him if he had not had an extraordinary presence of God with him, and special aids of his Spirit, upon this occasion. (*b.*) With great zeal for the honour of Christ, whom he could not endure to hear run down, and evil spoken of. (*c.*) With great boldness, and courage, and undauntedness, not terrified by the proudest of his adversaries. Those that are ambitious of the favours of God must not be afraid of the frowns of men. "See here," saith Dr. Whitby, "a blind man and unlearned judging more rightly of divine things than the whole learned council of the Pharisees, whence we learn that we are not always to be led by the authority of councils, popes, or bishops; and that it is not absurd for laymen sometimes to vary from their opinions, these overseers being sometimes guilty of great oversights."

b. His argument may be reduced into form, somewhat like that of David, Ps. lxvi. 18—20. The proposition in David's argument is, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me;* here it is to the same purport, *God heareth not sinners*: the assumption there is, *But verily God hath heard me;* here it is, Verily God hath heard Jesus, he hath been honoured with the doing of that which was never done before: the conclusion there is to the honour of God, *Blessed be God;* here to the honour of the Lord Jesus, He is *of God*.

(*a.*) He lays it down for an undoubted truth that none but good men are the favourites of heaven (*v.* 31): *Now we know*, you know it as well as I, *that God heareth not sinners;* but *if any man be a worshipper of God, and does his will, him he heareth.* Here,

[*a.*] The assertions, rightly understood, are true. *First*, Be it spoken to the terror of the wicked, *God heareth not sinners*, that is, such sinners as the Pharisees meant when they said of Christ, *He is a sinner*, one that, under the shelter of God's name, advanced the devil's interest. This bespeaks no discouragement to repenting returning sinners, but

to those that go on still in their trespasses, that make their prayers not only consistent with, but subservient to, their sins, as the hypocrites do; God will not *hear* them, he will not own them, nor give an answer of peace to their prayers. *Secondly*, Be it spoken to the comfort of the righteous, *If any man be a worshipper of God, and does his will, him he heareth.* Here is, 1. The complete character of a good man: he is one that *worships God*, and *does his will;* he is constant in his devotions at set times, and regular in his conversation at all times. He is one that makes it his business to glorify his Creator by the solemn adoration of his name and a sincere obedience to his will and law; both must go together. 2. The unspeakable comfort of such a man: him *God hears;* hears his complaints, and relieves him; hears his appeals, and rights him; hears his praises, and accepts them; hears his prayers, and answers them, Ps. xxxiv. 15.

[*b.*] The application of these truths is very pertinent to prove that he, at whose word such a divine power was put forth as cured one born blind, was not a bad man, but, having manifestly such an interest in the holy God as that he *heard him always* (*ch.* xi. 41, 42), was certainly a holy one.

(*b.*) He magnifies the miracles which Christ had wrought, to strengthen the argument the more (*v.* 32): *Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.* This is to show either, [*a.*] That it was a true miracle, and above the power of nature; it was never heard that any man, by the use of natural means, had cured one that was *born blind;* no doubt, this man and his parents had been very inquisitive into cases of this nature, whether any such had been helped, and could hear of none, which enabled him to speak this with the more assurance. Or, [*b.*] That it was an extraordinary miracle, and beyond the precedents of former miracles; neither Moses nor any of the prophets, though they did great things, ever did such things as this, wherein divine power and divine goodness seem to strive which should outshine. Moses wrought miraculous plagues, but Christ wrought miraculous cures. Note, *First*, The wondrous works of the Lord Jesus were such as the like had never been done before. *Secondly*, It becomes those who have received mercy from God to magnify the mercies they have received, and to speak honourably of them; not that thereby glory may redound to themselves, and they may seem to be extraordinary favourites of Heaven, but that God may have so much the more glory.

(*c.*) He therefore concludes, *If this man were not of God, he could do nothing*, that is, nothing extraordinary, no such thing as *this;* and therefore, no doubt, he is *of God*, notwithstanding his nonconformity to your traditions in the business of the sabbath day. Note, What Christ did on earth sufficiently demonstrated what he was in heaven; for, if he had not been sent of God, he could not have wrought such miracles. It is true the man of sin comes with *lying wonders*, but not with real miracles; it is likewise supposed that a false prophet might, by divine permission, give a *sign or a wonder* (Deut. xiii. 1, 2), yet the case is so put as that it would carry with it its own confutation, for it is to enforce a temptation to serve other gods, which was to set God *against himself*. It is true, likewise, that many wicked people have in Christ's name done many wonderful works, which did not prove those that wrought them to be of God, but him in whose name they were wrought. We may each of us know by this whether we are of God or no: *What do we?* What do we for God, for our souls, in working out our salvation? What do we more than others?

[2.] The Pharisees, finding themselves unable either to answer his reasonings or to bear them, fell foul upon him, and with a great deal of pride and passion broke off the discourse, *v.* 34. Here we are told,

First, What they *said*. Having nothing to reply to his argument, they reflected upon his person: *Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?* They take that amiss which they had reason to take kindly, and are cut to the heart with rage by that which should have pricked them to the heart with penitence. Observe, 1. How they despised him, and what a severe censure they passed upon him: "*Thou wast not only born in sin*, as every man is, but altogether so, wholly corrupt, and bearing about with thee in thy body as well as in thy soul the marks of that corruption; thou wast one whom nature *stigmatized.*" Had he still continued blind, it had been barbarous to upbraid him with it, and thence to gather that he was more deeply tainted with sin than other people; but it was most unjust to take notice of it now that the cure had not only rolled away the reproach of his blindness, but had *signalized* him as a favourite of Heaven. Some take it thus: "Thou hast been a common beggar, and such are too often common sinners, and thou hast, no doubt, been as bad as any of them;" whereas by his discourse he had proved the contrary, and had evinced a deep tincture of piety. But when proud imperious Pharisees resolve to run a man down, any thing shall serve for a pretence. 2. How they *disdain* to learn of him, or to receive instruction from him: *Dost thou teach us?* A mighty emphasis must be laid here upon *thou* and *us*. "What! wilt *thou*, a silly sorry fellow, ignorant and illiterate, that hast not seen the light of the sun a day to an end, a beggar by the way-side, of the very dregs and refuse of the town, wilt thou pretend to teach *us*, that are the sages of the law and grandees of the church, that sit in Moses's chair and are masters in Israel?" Note, Proud men scorn to be taught, especially by

their inferiors, whereas we should never think ourselves too old, nor too wise, nor too good, to learn. Those that have much wealth would have more; and why not those that have much knowledge? And those are to be valued by whom we may improve in learning. What a poor excuse was this for the Pharisees' infidelity, that it would be a disparagement to them to be instructed, and informed, and convinced, by such a silly fellow as this!

Secondly, What they did: They *cast him out*. Some understand it only of a rude and scornful dismission of him from their council-board; they turned him out of the room by head and shoulders, and perhaps ordered their servants to kick him; they thought it was time to send *him* far enough who came so near their consciences. But it seems rather to be a judicial act; they excommunicated him, probably with the highest degree of excommunication; they cut him off from being a member of the church of Israel. "This poor man," says Dr. Lightfoot, "was the first confessor, as John Baptist was the first martyr, of the Christian church." There was a law made that if any confessed Jesus to be the Christ he should be *cast out of the synagogue, v.* 22. But this man had only said of Jesus that he was a prophet, was *of God:* and yet they stretch the law to bring him under the lash of it, as if he had confessed him to be the Christ. To be justly excommunicated and cast out of a pure church, *clave non errante—when the key commits no error*, is a very dreadful thing; for what is so bound on earth is bound in heaven; but to be cast out of a corrupt church (which it is our duty to go out of) and that unjustly, though cast out with an *anathema*, and all the bug-bear ceremonies of bell, book, and candle, is what we have no reason at all to dread or be aggrieved at. *The curse causeless shall not come.* If they cast Christ's followers out of their synagogues, as he foretels (*ch.* xvi. 2), there is no harm done, when they are become *synagogues of Satan.*

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? 36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. 38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

In these verses we may observe,

I. The tender care which our Lord Jesus took of this poor man (*v.* 35): *When Jesus heard that they had cast him out* (for it is likely the town rang of it, and every body cried out shame upon them for it), then he *found him*, which implies his seeking him and looking after him, that he might encourage and comfort him, 1. Because he had, to the best of his knowledge, spoken so very well, so bravely, so boldly, in defence of the Lord Jesus. Note, Jesus Christ will be sure to stand by his witnesses, and own those that own him and his truth and ways. Earthly princes neither do, nor can, take cognizance of all that vindicate them and their government and administration; but our Lord Jesus knows and observes all the faithful testimonies we bear to him at any time, and a book of remembrance is written, and it shall redound not only to our credit hereafter, but our comfort now. 2. Because the Pharisees had cast him out and abused him. Besides the common regard which the righteous Judge of the world has to those who suffer wrongfully (Ps. ciii. 6), there is a particular notice taken of those that suffer in the cause of Christ and for the testimony of a good conscience. Here was one poor man suffering for Christ, and he took care that as his afflictions abounded his consolations should *much more abound.* Note, (1.) Though persecutors may exclude good men from their communion, yet they cannot exclude them from communion with Christ, nor put them out of the way of his visits. Happy are they who have a friend from whom men cannot debar them. (2.) Jesus Christ will graciously find and receive those who for his sake are unjustly rejected and cast out by men. He will be a hiding place to his outcasts, and appear, to the joy of those whom their brethren hated and cast out.

II. The comfortable converse Christ had with him, wherein he brings him acquainted with the consolation of Israel. He had well improved the knowledge he had, and now Christ gives him further instruction; for he that is faithful in a little shall be entrusted with more, Matt. xiii. 12.

1. Our Lord Jesus examines his faith: "*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* Dost thou give credit to the promises of the Messiah? Dost thou expect his coming, and art thou ready to receive and embrace him when he is manifested to thee?" This was that faith of the Son of God by which the saints lived before his manifestation. Observe, (1.) The Messiah is here called the *Son of God*, and so the Jews had learned to call him from the prophecies, Ps. ii. 7; lxxxix. 27. See *ch.* i. 49, *Thou art the Son of God*, that is, the true Messiah. Those that expected the temporal kingdom of the Messiah delighted rather in calling him the *Son of David*, which gave more countenance to that expectation, Matt. xxii. 42. But Christ, that he might give us an idea of his kingdom, as purely spiritual and divine, calls himself the *Son of God*, and rather *Son of man* in general than of David in particular. (2.) The desires and expectations of the Messiah, which the Old-Testament saints had, guided by and grounded upon the promise, were graciously interpreted and ac-

cepted as their believing on the *Son of God.* This faith Christ here enquires after: *Dost thou believe?* Note, The great thing which is now required of us (1 John iii. 23), and which will shortly be enquired after concerning us, is our *believing on the Son of God,* and by this we must stand or fall for ever.

2. The poor man solicitously enquires concerning the Messiah he was to believe in, professing his readiness to embrace him and close with him (*v.* 36): *Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?* (1.) Some think he did know that Jesus, who cured him, was the Son of God, but did not know which was Jesus, and therefore, supposing this person that talked with him to be a follower of Jesus, desired him to do him the favour to direct him to his master; not that he might satisfy his curiosity with the sight of him, but that he might the more firmly believe in him, and profess his faith, and *know whom he had believed.* See Cant. v. 6, 7; iii. 2, 3. It is Christ only that can direct us to himself. (2.) Others think he did know that this person who talked with him was Jesus, the same that cured him, whom he believed a great and good man and a prophet, but did not yet know that he was the Son of God and the true Messiah. "Lord, I believe there is a Christ to come; thou who hast given me bodily sight, tell me, O tell me, who and where this Son of God is." Christ's question intimated that the Messiah was come, and was now among them, which he presently takes the hint of, and asks, *Where is he, Lord?* The question was rational and just: *Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?* For how could he believe in one of whom he had not heard; the work of ministers is to tell us *who the Son of God is,* that we may believe on him, *ch.* xx. 31.

3. Our Lord Jesus graciously reveals himself to him as that Son of God on whom he must believe: *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee, v.* 37. Thou needest not go far to find out the Son of God, *Behold the Word is nigh thee.* We do not find that Christ did thus expressly, and in so many words, reveal himself to any other as to this man here and to the woman of *Samaria: I that speak unto thee am he.* He left others to find out by arguments who he was, but to these weak and foolish things of the world he chose to manifest himself, so as not to the *wise and prudent.* Christ here describes himself to this man by two things, which express his great favour to him:—(1.) *Thou hast seen him;* and he was much indebted to the Lord Jesus for opening his eyes, that he might see him. Now he was made sensible, more than ever, what an unspeakable mercy it was to be cured of his blindness, that he might see the Son of God, a sight which rejoiced his heart more than that of the *light of this world.* Note, The greatest comfort of bodily eyesight is its serviceableness to our faith and the interests of our souls. How contentedly might this man have returned to his former blindness, like old Simeon, now that his eyes had *seen God's salvation!* If we apply this to the opening of the eyes of the mind, it intimates that spiritual sight is given principally for this end, that we may see Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Can we say that by faith we have seen Christ, seen him in his beauty and glory, in his ability and willingness to save, so seen him as to be satisfied concerning him, to be satisfied in him? Let us give him the praise, who opened our eyes. (2.) *It is he that talketh with thee;* and he was indebted to Christ for condescending to do this. He was not only favoured with a sight of Christ, but was admitted into fellowship and communion with him. Great princes are willing to be *seen* by those whom yet they will not vouchsafe to *talk with.* But Christ, by his word and Spirit, talks with those whose desires are towards him, and in talking with them manifests himself to them, as he did to the two disciples, when he talked their hearts warm, Luke xxiv. 32. Observe, This poor man was solicitously enquiring after the Saviour, when at the same time he saw him, and was talking with him. Note, Jesus Christ is often nearer the souls that seek him than they themselves are aware of. Doubting Christians are sometimes saying, *Where is the Lord?* and fearing that they are cast out from his sight when at the same time it is he that *talks with them,* and *puts strength into them.*

4. The poor man readily entertains this surprising revelation, and, in a transport of joy and wonder, he said, *Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him.* (1.) He professed his faith in Christ: *Lord, I believe thee to be the Son of God.* He would not dispute any thing that *he* said who had shown such mercy to him, and wrought such a miracle for him, nor doubt of the truth of a doctrine which was confirmed by such signs. Believing with the heart, he thus confesses with the mouth; and now the bruised reed was become a cedar. (2.) He paid his homage to him: *He worshipped him,* not only gave him the civil respect due to a great man, and the acknowledgments owing to a kind benefactor, but herein gave him divine honour, and worshipped him as the *Son of God* manifested in the flesh. None but God is to be worshipped; so that in worshipping Jesus he owned him to be God. Note, True faith will show itself in a humble adoration of the Lord Jesus. Those who believe in him will see all the reason in the world to worship him. We never read any more of this man; but, it is very likely, from henceforth he became a constant follower of Christ.

39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?
41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Christ, having spoken comfort to the poor man that was persecuted, here speaks conviction to his persecutors, a specimen of the distributions of trouble and rest at the great day, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. Probably this was not immediately after his discourse with the man, but he took the next opportunity that offered itself to address the Pharisees. Here is,

I. The account Christ gives of his design in coming into the world (*v.* 39): *For judgment I am* come to order and administer the great affairs of the *kingdom of God among men*, and am invested with a judicial power in order thereunto, to be executed in conformity to the wise counsels of God, and in pursuance of them." What Christ spoke, he spoke not as a preacher in the pulpit, but as a king upon the throne, and a judge upon the bench.

1. His business into the world was *great;* he came to keep the assizes and general gaol-delivery. He came *for judgment*, that is, (1.) To preach a doctrine and a law which would try men, and effectually discover and distinguish them, and would be completely fitted, in all respects, to be the rule of government now and of judgment shortly. (2.) To put a difference between men, by revealing the thoughts of many hearts, and laying open men's true characters, by this one test, whether they were well or ill affected to him. (3.) To change the face of government in his church, to abolish the Jewish economy, to take down that fabric, which, though erected for the time by the hand of God himself, yet by lapse of time was antiquated, and by the incurable corruptions of the managers of it was become rotten and dangerous, and to erect a new building by another model, to institute new ordinances and offices, to abrogate Judaism and enact Christianity; *for* this *judgment he came into the world*, and it was a great revolution.

2. This great truth he explains by a metaphor borrowed from the miracle which he had lately wrought. That *those who see not might see, and that those who see might be made blind.* Such a difference of Christ's coming is often spoken of; to some his gospel is a *savour of life unto life*, to others of *death unto death.* (1.) This is applicable to nations and people, that the Gentiles, who had long been destitute of the light of divine revelation, might see it; and the Jews, who had long enjoyed it, might have the things of their peace hid from their eyes, Hos. i. 10; ii. 23. The Gentiles see a great light, while blindness is *happened unto Israel*, and their *eyes are darkened.* (2.) To particular persons. Christ came into the world, [1.] Intentionally and designedly to give sight to those that were spiritually blind; by his word to reveal the object, and by his Spirit to heal the organ, that many precious souls might be turned *from darkness to light.* He came *for judgment*, that is, to set those at liberty from their dark prison that were willing to be released, Isa. lxi. 1. [2.] Eventually, and in the issue, *that those who see might be made blind;* that those who have a high conceit of their own wisdom, and set up that in contradiction to divine revelation, might be sealed up in ignorance and infidelity. The preaching of the cross was foolishness, and an infatuating thing, to those who by wisdom *knew not God.* Christ *came into the world for* this *judgment*, to administer the affairs of a spiritual kingdom, seated in men's minds. Whereas, in the Jewish church, the blessings and judgments of God's government were mostly temporal, now the method of administration should be changed; and as the good subjects of his kingdom should be blessed with spiritual blessings in heavenly things, such as arise from a due illumination of the mind, so the rebels should be punished with spiritual plagues, not war, famine, and pestilence, as formerly, but such as arise from a *judicial infatuation*, hardness of heart, terror of conscience, strong delusions, vile affections. In this way Christ will *judge between cattle and cattle*, Ezek. xxxiv. 17, 22.

II. The Pharisees' cavil at this. They were *with him*, not desirous to learn any good from him, but to form evil against him; and they said, *Are we blind also?* When Christ said that *those who saw* should by his coming be made blind, they apprehended that he meant them, who were the *seers* of the people, and valued themselves on their *insight* and *foresight.* "Now," say they, "we know that the common people are blind; but *are we blind also?* What we? The rabbin, the doctors, the learned in the laws, the graduates in the schools, *are we blind too?*" This is *scandalum magnatum—a libel on the great.* Note, Frequently those that need reproof most, and deserve it best, though they have wit enough to discern a *tacit* one, have not grace enough to bear a *just* one. These Pharisees took this reproof for a reproach, as those lawyers (Luke xi. 45): "*Are we blind also?* Darest thou say that we are blind, whose judgment every one has such a veneration for, values, and yields to?" Note, Nothing fortifies men's corrupt hearts more against the convictions of the word, nor more effectually repels them, than the good opinion, especially if it be a high opinion, which others have of them; as if all that had gained applause with men must needs obtain acceptance with God, than which nothing is more false and deceitful, for God sees not as man sees.

III. Christ's answer to this cavil, which, if it did not convince them, yet silenced them: *If you were blind you should have no sin; but*

now you say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth. They gloried that they were not blind, as the common people, were not so credulous and manageable as they, but would *see with their own eyes,* having abilities, as they thought, sufficient for their own guidance, so that they needed not any body to lead them. This very thing which they gloried in, Christ here tells them, was their shame and ruin. For,

1. *If you were blind, you would have no sin.* (1.) "If you had been really ignorant, your sin had not been so deeply aggravated, nor would you have had so much sin to answer for as now you have. If you were blind, as the poor Gentiles are, and many of your own poor subjects, from whom you have taken the key of knowledge, you would have had comparatively *no sin.*" The times of ignorance God *winked at;* invincible ignorance, though it does not justify sin, excuses it, and lessens the guilt. It will be more tolerable with those that perish for lack of vision than with those that *rebel against the light.* (2.) "If you had been sensible of your own blindness, if when you would see nothing else you could have seen the need of one to lead you, you would soon have accepted Christ as your guide, and then you would *have had no sin,* you would have submitted to an evangelical righteousness, and have been put into a justified state." Note, Those that are convinced of their disease are in a fair way to be cured, for there is not a greater hindrance to the salvation of souls than self-sufficiency.

2. "*But now you say, We see;* now that you have knowledge, and are instructed out of the law, your sin is highly aggravated; and now that you have a conceit of that knowledge, and think you see your way better than any body can show it you, *therefore your sin remains,* your case is desperate, and your disease incurable." And as those are most blind who *will not see,* so their blindness is most dangerous who fancy they do see. No patients are so hardly managed as those in a frenzy who say that they are *well,* and nothing ails them. The sin of those who are self-conceited and self-confident *remains,* for they reject the gospel of grace, and therefore the guilt of their sin remains unpardoned; and they forfeit the Spirit of grace, and therefore the power of their sin remains unbroken. *Seest thou a wise man in his own conceit?* Hearest thou the Pharisees say, *We see? There is more hope of a fool,* of a publican and a harlot, than of such.

CHAP. X.

In this chapter we have, I. Christ's parabolical discourse concerning himself as the door of the sheepfold, and the shepherd of the sheep, ver. 1—18. II. The various sentiments of people upon it, ver. 19—21. III. The dispute Christ had with the Jews in the temple at the feast of dedication, ver. 22—39. IV. His departure into the country thereupon, ver. 40—42.

VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. 6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. 7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep,* and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. 17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

It is not certain whether this discourse was at the *feast of dedication* in the winter (spoken of *v.* 22), which may be taken as the date, not only of what follows, but of what goes before (that which countenances this is, that Christ, in his discourse there, carries on the metaphor of the sheep (*v.* 26, 27), whence it seems that that discourse and this were at the same time); or whether this was a continuation of his parley with the Pharisees, in the close of the foregoing chapter. The Pharisees supported themselves in their opposition to Christ with this principle, that they were the *pastors of the church*, and that Jesus, having no commission from them, was an intruder and an impostor, and therefore the people were bound in duty to stick to *them*, against *him*. In opposition to this, Christ here describes who were the false shepherds, and who the true, leaving them to infer what they were.

I. Here is the parable or similitude proposed (*v.* 1—5); it is borrowed from the custom of that country, in the management of their sheep. Similitudes, used for the illustration of divine truths, should be taken from those things that are most familiar and common, that the things of God be not clouded by that which should clear them. The preface to this discourse is solemn: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, —Amen, amen.* This vehement asseveration intimates the certainty and weight of what he said; we find *amen* doubled in the church's praises and prayers, Ps. xli. 13; lxxii. 19; lxxxix. 52. If we would have our *amens* accepted in heaven, let Christ's *amens* be prevailing on earth; his repeated *amens.*

1. In the parable we have, (1.) The evidence of a thief and a robber, that comes to do mischief to the flock, and damage to the owner, *v.* 1. *He enters not by the door*, as having no lawful cause of entry, but *climbs up some other way*, at a window, or some breach in the wall. How industrious are wicked people to do mischief! What plots will they lay, what pains will they take, what hazards will they run, in their wicked pursuits! This should shame us out of our slothfulness and cowardice in the service of God. (2.) The character that distinguishes the rightful owner, who has a property in the sheep, and a care for them: *He enters in by the door*, as one having authority (*v.* 2), and he comes to do them some good office or other, to *bind up that which is broken*, and *strengthen that which is sick*, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. Sheep need man's care, and, in return for it, are serviceable to man (1 Cor. ix. 7); they clothe and feed those by whom they are coted and fed. (3.) The ready entrance that the shepherd finds: *To him the porter openeth*, *v.* 3. Anciently they had their sheepfolds within the outer gates of their houses, for the greater safety of their flocks, so that none could come to them the right way, but such as the porter opened to or the master of the house gave the keys to. (4.) The care he takes and the provision he makes for his sheep. The *sheep hear his voice*, when he speaks familiarly to them, when they come into the fold, as men now do to their dogs and horses; and, which is more, he *calls his own sheep by name*, so exact is the notice he takes of them, the account he keeps of them; and he leads them out from the fold to the green pastures; and (*v.* 4, 5) when he *turns them out* to graze he does not drive them, but (such was the custom in those times) he goes before them, to prevent any mischief or danger that might meet them, and they, being used to it, *follow him*, and are safe. (5.) The strange attendance of the sheep upon the shepherd: *They know his voice*, so as to discern his mind by it, and to distinguish it from that of a stranger (for *the ox knows his owner*, Isa. i. 3), and *a stranger will they not follow*, but, as suspecting some ill design, will flee from him, not *knowing his voice*, but that it is not the voice of their own shepherd. This is the parable; we have the key to it, Ezek. xxxiv. 31: *You my flock are men, and I am your God.*

2. Let us observe from this parable, (1.) That good men are fitly compared to sheep. Men, as creatures depending on their Creator, are called the *sheep of his pasture.* Good men, as new creatures, have the good qualities of sheep, *harmless* and inoffensive as sheep; *meek* and quiet, without noise; *patient* as sheep under the hand both of the shearer and of the butcher; *useful* and profitable, tame and tractable, to the shepherd, and *sociable* one with another, and much used in sacrifices. (2.) The church of God in the world is a *sheepfold*, into which the *children of God* that were scattered abroad are *gathered together* (*ch.* xi. 52), and in which they are united and incorporated; it is a good fold, Ezek. xxxiv. 14. See Mic. ii. 12. This fold is well fortified, for God himself is as a *wall of fire* about it, Zech. ii. 5. (3.) This sheepfold lies much exposed to thieves and robbers; crafty seducers that debauch and deceive, and cruel persecutors that destroy and devour; *grievous wolves* (Acts xx. 29); thieves that would steal Christ's sheep from him, to sacrifice them to devils, or steal their food from them, that they might perish for lack of it; *wolves* in sheep's clothing, Matt. vii. 15. (4.) The great Shepherd of the sheep takes wonderful care of the flock and of all that belong to it. God is the great Shepherd, Ps. xxiii. 1; lxxx. 1. He knows those that are his, calls them by name, marks them for himself, leads them out to fat pastures, makes them both feed and rest there, speaks comfortably to them, guards them by his providence, guides them by his Spirit and word, and goes before them, *to set them in the way of his steps.* (5.) The under-shepherds, who are entrusted to feed the flock of God, ought to be careful and faithful in the discharge of that trust; magistrates must defend them, and protect and advance all their secular

interests; ministers must serve them in their spiritual interests, must *feed their souls* with the word of God faithfully opened and applied, and with gospel ordinances duly administered, *taking the oversight of them.* They must *enter by the door* of a regular ordination, and to such *the porter will open;* the Spirit of Christ will *set before them an open door,* give them authority in the church, and assurance in their own bosoms. They must know the members of their flocks by name, and watch over them; must lead them into the pastures of public ordinances, preside among them, be their mouth to God and God's to them; and in their conversation must be examples to the believers. (6.) Those who are truly the sheep of Christ will be very observant of their Shepherd, and very cautious and shy of strangers. [1.] *They follow their Shepherd,* for they *know his voice,* having both a discerning ear, and an obedient heart. [2.] *They flee from a stranger,* and dread following him, because they know not his voice. It is dangerous following those in whom we discern not the *voice of Christ,* and who would draw us from *faith in him* to *fancies concerning him.* And those who have experienced the power and efficacy of divine truths upon their souls, and have the savour and relish of them, have a wonderful sagacity to discover Satan's wiles, and to discern between good and evil.

II. The Jews' ignorance of the drift and meaning of this discourse (*v.* 6): *Jesus spoke this parable* to them, this figurative, but wise, elegant, and instructive discourse, *but they understood not what the things were which he spoke unto them,* were not aware whom he meant by the *thieves and robbers* and whom by the *good Shepherd.* It is the sin and shame of many who hear the word of Christ that they do not understand it, and they do not because they will not, and because they will *mis-understand it.* They have no acquaintance with, nor taste of, the things themselves, and therefore do not understand the parables and comparisons with which they are illustrated. The Pharisees had a great conceit of their own knowledge, and could not bear that it should be questioned, and yet they had not sense enough to *understand the things that Jesus spoke of;* they were above their capacity. Frequently the greatest pretenders to knowledge are most ignorant in the things of God.

III. Christ's explication of this parable, opening the particulars of it fully. Whatever difficulties there may be in the sayings of the Lord Jesus, we shall find him ready to explain himself, if we be but willing to understand him. We shall find one scripture expounding another, and the *blessed Spirit* interpreter to the *blessed Jesus.* Christ, in the parable, had distinguished the shepherd from the robber by this, that he *enters in by the door.* Now, in the explication of the parable, he makes himself to be both *the door* by which the shepherd enters and the shepherd that enters in by the door. Though it may be a solecism in rhetoric to make the same person to be both the *door* and the *shepherd,* it is no solecism in divinity to make Christ to have his authority from himself, as he has life in himself; and *himself* to *enter by his own blood,* as the door, *into the holy place.*

1. Christ is *the door.* This he saith to those who pretended to *seek for righteousness,* but, like the Sodomites, *wearied themselves to find the door,* where it was not to be found. He saith it to the Jews, who would be thought God's only sheep, and to the Pharisees, who would be thought their only shepherds: *I am the door* of the sheepfold; the door of the church.

(1.) In general, [1.] He is as a *door shut,* to keep out thieves and robbers, and such as are not fit to be admitted. The shutting of the door is the securing of the house; and what greater security has the church of God than the interposal of the Lord Jesus, and his wisdom, power, and goodness, betwixt it and all its enemies? [2.] He is as a *door open* for passage and communication. *First,* By Christ, as the door, we have our first admission into the flock of God, *ch.* xiv. 6. *Secondly,* We go in and out in a religious conversation, assisted by him, accepted in him; walking up and down in his name, Zech. x. 12. *Thirdly,* By him God comes to his church, visits it, and communicates himself to it. *Fourthly,* By him, as the door, the sheep are at last admitted into the heavenly kingdom, Matt. xxv. 34.

(2.) More particularly,

[1.] Christ is the door of *the shepherds,* so that none who come not in by him are to be accounted *pastors,* but (according to the rule laid down, *v.* 1) *thieves and robbers* (though they pretended to be *shepherds);* but the *sheep did not hear them.* This refers to all those that had the character of shepherds in *Israel,* whether magistrates or ministers, that exercised their office without any regard to the Messiah, or any other expectations of him than what were suggested by their own carnal interest. Observe, *First,* The character given of them: they are *thieves and robbers* (*v.* 8); all that *went before him,* not in time, many of them were faithful shepherds, but all that *anticipated* his commission, and went before he sent them (Jer. xxiii. 21), that assumed a precedency and superiority above him, as the antichrist is said to *exalt himself,* 2 Thess. ii. 4. "The scribes, and Pharisees, and chief priests, *all, even as many as have come before me,* that have endeavoured to forestal my interest, and to prevent my gaining any room in the minds of people, by prepossessing them with prejudices against me, they are *thieves and robbers,* and steal those hearts which they have no title to, defrauding the right owner of his property." They condemned our Saviour as a thief and a robber,

because he did not come in by them as the door, nor take out a license from them; but he shows that they ought to have received their commission from him, to have been admitted by him, and to have come after him, and because they did not, but stepped *before him*, they were *thieves and robbers*. They would not come in as his disciples, and therefore were condemned as usurpers, and their pretended commissions vacated and superseded. Note, Rivals with Christ are robbers of his church, however they pretend to be *shepherds*, nay, *shepherds of shepherds*. *Secondly*, The care taken to preserve the sheep from them: *But the sheep did not hear them*. Those that had a true savour of piety, that were spiritual and heavenly, and sincerely devoted to God and godliness, could by no means approve of the traditions of the elders, nor relish their formalities. Christ's disciples, without any particular instructions from their Master, made no conscience of eating with unwashen hands, or plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day; for nothing is more opposite to true Christianity than Pharisaism is, nor any thing more disrelishing to a soul truly devout than their hypocritical devotions.

[2.] Christ is the door of *the sheep* (*v.* 9): *By me* (δι ἐμοῦ—*through me* as the door) *if any man enter into the sheepfold*, as one of the flock, he *shall be saved*; shall not only be safe from thieves and robbers, but he shall be happy, he *shall go in and out*. Here are, *First*, Plain directions how to come into the fold: we must come in *by Jesus Christ* as the door. By faith in him, as the great Mediator between God and man, we come into covenant and communion with God. There is no entering into God's church but by coming into Christ's church; nor are any looked upon as members of the kingdom of God among men but those that are willing to submit to the grace and government of the Redeemer. We must now enter by the *door of faith* (Acts xiv. 27), since the door of *innocency* is shut against us, and that *pass* become unpassable, Gen. iii. 24. *Secondly*, Precious promises to those who observe this direction. 1. They *shall be saved hereafter*; this is the privilege of *their home*. These sheep shall be saved from being distrained and impounded by divine justice for trespass done, satisfaction being made for the damage by their great Shepherd, saved from being a prey to the roaring lion; they shall be *for ever happy*. 2. In the mean time they shall *go in and out and find pasture*; this is the privilege of *their way*. They shall have their conversation in the world by the grace of Christ, shall be in his fold as a man at his own house, where he has *free ingress, egress*, and *regress*. True believers are *at home* in Christ; when they go out, they are not *shut out* as strangers, but have liberty to come in again; when they come in, they are not *shut in* as trespassers, but have liberty to go out. They go out to the field in the morning, they come into the fold at night; and in both the Shepherd leads and keeps them, and they *find pasture* in both: grass in the field, fodder in the fold. In public, in private, they have the word of God to converse with, by which their spiritual life is supported and nourished, and out of which their gracious desires are satisfied; they are replenished with the goodness of God's house.

2. Christ is the *shepherd*, *v.* 11, &c. He was prophesied of under the Old Testament as a *shepherd*, Isa. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24; Zech. xiii. 7. In the New Testament he is spoken of as the *great Shepherd* (Heb. xiii. 20), the *chief Shepherd* (1 v. 4), the *Shepherd and bishop of our souls*, 1 Pet. ii. 25. God, our great owner, the sheep of whose pasture we are by creation, has constituted his Son Jesus to be our *shepherd*; and here again and again he owns the relation. He has all that care of his church, and every believer, that a good shepherd has of his flock; and expects all that attendance and observance from the church, and every believer, which the shepherds in those countries had from their flocks.

(1.) Christ is *a shepherd*, and not as the thief, not as those that *came not in by the door*. Observe,

[1.] The mischievous design of the thief (*v.* 10): *The thief cometh not* with any good intent, but to *steal, and to kill, and to destroy*. *First*, Those whom they *steal*, whose hearts and affections they steal from Christ and his pastures, they *kill and destroy* spiritually; for the *heresies* they *privily bring in* are *damnable*. Deceivers of souls are murderers of souls. Those that steal away the scripture by keeping it in an unknown tongue, that steal away the sacraments by maiming them and altering the property of them, that steal away Christ's ordinances to put their own inventions in the room of them, they *kill and destroy*; ignorance and idolatry are destructive things. *Secondly*, Those whom they cannot *steal*, whom they can neither lead, drive, nor carry away, from the flock of Christ, they aim by persecutions and massacres to *kill and destroy* corporally. He that will not suffer himself to be robbed is in danger of being slain.

[2.] The gracious design of the shepherd; he is come,

First, To *give life to the sheep*. In opposition to the design of the thief, which is to *kill and destroy* (which was the design of the *scribes* and *Pharisees*) Christ saith, *I am come among men*, 1. That *they might have life*. He came to put life into the flock, the church in general, which had seemed rather like a valley full of dry bones than like a pasture covered over with flocks. Christ came to vindicate divine truths, to purify divine ordinances, to redress grievances, and to revive dying zeal, to *seek* those of his flock that were *lost*, to *bind up that which was broken* (Ezek.

xxxiv. 16), and this to his church is *as life from the dead.* He came to *give life* to particular believers. Life is inclusive of all good, and stands in opposition to the death threatened (Gen. ii. 17); that *we might have life,* as a criminal has when he is pardoned, as a sick man when he is cured, a dead man when he is raised; that we might be justified, sanctified, and at last glorified. 2. That they might have it *more abundantly,* καὶ περισσὸν ἔχωσιν. As we read it, it is *comparative,* that they might have a life *more abundant* than that which was lost and forfeited by sin, more abundant than that which was promised by the law of Moses, length of days in Canaan, more abundant than could have been expected or than we are *able to ask or think.* But it may be construed without a note of comparison, *that they might have abundance,* or might *have it abundantly.* Christ came to give life and περισσὸν τι—*something more,* something *better,* life with advantage; that in Christ we might not only live, but live comfortably, live plentifully, live and rejoice. Life in abundance is *eternal life,* life without death or fear of death, life and *much more.*

Secondly, To *give his life for the sheep,* and this that he might give life *to them* (*v.* 11): *The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* 1. It is the property of every good shepherd to hazard and expose his life for the sheep. Jacob did so, when he would go through such a fatigue to attend them, Gen. xxxi. 40. So did David, when he *slew the lion and the bear.* Such a shepherd of souls was St. Paul, who would gladly *spend, and be spent,* for their service, and *counted not his life dear to him,* in comparison with their salvation. But, 2. It was the prerogative of the great Shepherd to give his life to purchase his flock (Acts xx. 28), to satisfy for their trespass, and to shed his blood to wash and cleanse them.

(2.) Christ is *a good shepherd,* and not as a hireling. There were many that were not thieves, aiming to kill and destroy the sheep, but passed for shepherds, yet were very careless in the discharge of their duty, and through their neglect the flock was greatly damaged; *foolish shepherds, idle shepherds,* Zech. xi. 15, 17. In opposition to these,

[1.] Christ here *calls himself the good shepherd* (*v.* 11), and again (*v.* 14) ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς—*that Shepherd, that good Shepherd,* whom God had promised. Note, Jesus Christ is the best of shepherds, the best in the world to take the over-sight of souls, none so skilful, so faithful, so tender, as he, no such feeder and leader, no such protector and healer of souls as he.

[2.] He *proves himself* so, in opposition to all hirelings, *v.* 12—14. Where observe,

First, The carelessness of the unfaithful shepherd described (*v.* 12, 13); he that is a hireling, that is employed as a servant and is paid for his pains, *whose own the sheep are not,* who has neither profit nor loss by them, *sees the wolf coming,* or some other danger threatening, and *leaves the sheep* to the wolf, for in truth he *careth not for them.* Here is plain reference to that of the idol-shepherd, Zech. xi. 17. Evil shepherds, magistrates and ministers, are here described both by their bad principles and their bad practices.

a. Their *bad principles,* the root of their bad practices. What makes those that have the charge of souls in trying times to betray their trust, and in quiet times not to mind it? What makes them false, and trifling, and self-seeking? It is because they are *hirelings,* and *care not for the sheep.* That is, (*a.*) The wealth of the world is the chief of their good; it is because they are *hirelings.* They undertook the shepherds' office, as a trade to live and grow rich by, not as an opportunity of serving Christ and doing good. It is the love of money, and of their own bellies, that carries them on in it. Not that those are hirelings who, while they *serve at the altar, live,* and live comfortably, *upon the altar.* The labourer is worthy of his meat; and a scandalous maintenance will soon make a scandalous ministry. But those are *hirelings* that love the wages more than the work, and *set their hearts* upon that, as the hireling is said to do, Deut. xxiv. 15. See 1 Sam. ii. 29; Isa. lvi. 11; Mic. iii. 5, 11. (*b.*) The work of their place is the least of their care. They *value not the sheep,* are unconcerned in the souls of others; their business is to be their brothers' lords, not their brothers' keepers or helpers; they *seek their own things,* and do not, like Timothy, *naturally care for the state of souls.* What can be expected but that they will flee when *the wolf comes.* He *careth not for the sheep,* for he is one *whose own the sheep are not.* In one respect we may say of the best of the under-shepherds that the sheep are *not their own,* they have not dominion over them nor property in them (*feed my sheep* and *my lambs,* saith Christ); but in respect of dearness and affection they should be *their own.* Paul looked upon those as *his own* whom he called his *dearly beloved and longed for.* Those who do not cordially espouse the church's interests, and make them their own, will not long be faithful to them.

b. Their *bad practices,* the effect of these bad principles, *v.* 12. See here, (*a.*) How basely the hireling deserts his post; when he sees *the wolf coming,* though then there is most need of him, he *leaves the sheep and flees.* Note, Those who mind their safety more than their duty are an easy prey to Satan's temptations. (*b.*) How fatal the consequences are! the hireling fancies the sheep may look to themselves, but it does not prove so: *the wolf catches them,* and *scatters the sheep,* and woeful havoc is made of the flock, which will all be charged upon the treacherous shepherd. The blood of perishing souls is required at the hand of the careless watchmen.

Secondly, See here the grace and tender-

ness of the good Shepherd set over against the former, as it was in the prophecy (Ezek. xxxiv. 21, 22, &c.): *I am the good Shepherd.* It is matter of comfort to the church, and all her friends, that, however she may be damaged and endangered by the treachery and mismanagement of her under-officers, the Lord Jesus is, and will be, as he ever has been, *the good Shepherd.* Here are two great instances of the shepherd's goodness.

a. His *acquainting* himself with his flock, with all that belong or in any wise appertain to his flock, which are of two sorts, both known to him:—

(*a.*) He is acquainted with all that *are now of his flock* (*v.* 14, 15), as the good Shepherd (*v.* 3, 4): *I know my sheep and am known of mine.* Note, There is a mutual acquaintance between Christ and true believers; they know one another very well, and knowledge notes affection.

[*a.*] Christ *knows his sheep.* He knows with a *distinguishing* eye who are his sheep, and who are not; he knows the sheep under their many infirmities, and the goats under their most plausible disguises. He knows with a *favourable* eye those that in truth are his own sheep; he takes cognizance of their state, concerns himself for them, has a tender and affectionate regard to them, and is continually mindful of them in the intercession he ever lives to make within the veil; he visits them graciously by his Spirit, and has communion with them; he *knows* them, that is, he approves and accepts of them, as Ps. i. 6; xxxvii. 18; Exod. xxxiii. 17.

[*b.*] He is *known of them.* He observes them with an eye of favour, and they observe him with an eye of faith. Christ's knowing his sheep is put before their knowing him, for he knew and loved us first (1 John iv. 19), and it is not so much our knowing him as our being known of him that is our happiness, Gal. iv. 9. Yet it is the character of Christ's sheep that *they know him;* know him from all pretenders and intruders; they know his mind, know his voice, know by experience the power of his death. Christ speaks here as if he gloried in being known by his sheep, and thought their respect an honour to him. Upon this occasion Christ mentions (*v.* 15) the mutual acquaintance between his Father and himself: *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father.* Now this may be considered, either, *First,* As the *ground* of that intimate acquaintance and relation which subsist between Christ and believers. The covenant of grace, which is the bond of this relation, is founded in the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, which, we may be sure, stands firm; for the Father and the Son understood one another perfectly well in that matter, and there could be no mistake, which might leave the matter at any uncertainty, or bring it into any hazard. The Lord Jesus *knows whom he hath chosen,* and is sure of them (*ch.* xiii. 18), and they also *know whom they have trusted,* and are sure of him (2 Tim. i. 12), and the ground of both is the perfect knowledge which the Father and the Son had of one another's mind, when *the counsel of peace was between them both.* Or, *Secondly,* As an apt similitude, illustrating the intimacy that is between Christ and believers. It may be connected with the foregoing words, thus: *I know my sheep, and am known of mine, even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father;* compare *ch.* xvii. 21. 1. As the Father knew the Son, and loved him, and owned him in his sufferings, when he was *led as a sheep to the slaughter,* so Christ knows his sheep, and has a watchful tender eye upon them, will be with them when they are *left alone,* as his Father was with him. 2. As the Son knew the Father, loved and obeyed him, and always did those things that pleased him, confiding in him as his God even when he seemed to forsake him, so believers know Christ with an obediential fiducial regard.

(*b.*) He is acquainted with those that are *hereafter to be of this flock* (*v.* 16): *Other sheep I have,* have a right to and an interest in, *which are not of this fold,* of the Jewish church; *them also I must bring.* Observe,

[*a.*] The eye that Christ had to the poor Gentiles. He had sometimes intimated his special concern for *the lost sheep of the house of Israel;* to them indeed his personal ministry was confined; but, saith he, *I have other sheep.* Those who in process of time should believe in Christ, and be brought into obedience to him from among the Gentiles, are here called *sheep,* and he is said to have them, though as yet they were *uncalled,* and many of them *unborn,* because they were chosen of God, and given to Christ in the counsels of divine love from eternity. Christ has a right, by virtue of the Father's donation and his own purchase, to many a soul of which he has not yet the possession; thus he had *much people* in Corinth, when as yet it lay in wickedness, Acts xviii. 10. "Those other sheep *I have,*" saith Christ, "I have them on my heart, have them in my eye, am as sure to have them as if I had them already." Now Christ speaks of those *other sheep, First,* To take off the contempt that was put upon him, as having *few followers,* as having but a *little flock,* and therefore, if a *good* shepherd, yet a *poor* shepherd: "But," saith he, "I have more sheep than you see." *Secondly,* To take down the pride and vain-glory of the Jews, who thought the Messiah must gather all his sheep from among them. "No," saith Christ, "I have others whom I will set with the lambs of my flock, though you disdain to set them with the dogs of your flock."

[*b.*] The purposes and resolves of his grace concerning them: "*Them also I must bring,* bring home to God, bring into the church, and, in order to this, bring off from their vain conversation, bring them back from their wanderings, as that *lost sheep,*" Luke xv. 5. But why *must* he bring them?

What was the necessity? *First*, The *necessity of their case* required it: "I *must* bring, or they must be left to wander endlessly, for, like sheep, they will never come back of themselves, and no other can or will bring them." *Secondly*, The *necessity of his own engagements* required it; he must bring them, or he would not be faithful to his trust, and true to his undertaking. "They are *my own*, bought and paid for, and therefore I *must not* neglect them nor leave them to perish." He *must* in honour *bring* those with whom he was entrusted.

[*c.*] The happy effect and consequence of this, in two things:—*First*, "They shall hear my voice. Not only my voice shall be heard *among them* (whereas they have not heard, and therefore could not believe, now the *sound* of the gospel shall *go to the ends of the earth)*, but it shall be heard *by them;* I will speak, and give to them to hear." Faith comes by hearing, and our diligent observance of the voice of Christ is both a means and an evidence of our being brought to Christ, and to God by him. *Secondly*, *There shall be one fold and one shepherd.* As there is one shepherd, so there shall be one fold. Both Jews and Gentiles, upon their turning to the faith of Christ, shall be incorporated in one church, be joint and equal sharers in the privileges of it, without distinction. Being united to Christ, they shall unite in him; two sticks shall become one in the hand of the Lord. Note, One shepherd makes one fold; one Christ makes one church. As the church is one in its constitution, subject to one head, animated by one Spirit, and guided by one rule, so the members of it ought to be one in love and affection, Eph. iv. 3—6.

b. Christ's *offering up himself for his sheep* is another proof of his being a *good shepherd*, and in this he yet more *commended his love*, *v.* 15, 17, 18.

(*a.*) He declares his purpose of *dying for his flock* (*v.* 15): *I lay down my life for the sheep.* He not only ventured his life for them (in such a case, the hope of *saving* it might balance the fear of *losing* it), but he actually *deposited* it, and submitted to a necessity of dying for our redemption; τίθημι—*I put it* as a pawn or pledge; as purchase-money paid down. Sheep appointed for the slaughter, ready to be sacrificed, were ransomed with the blood of the shepherd. He laid down his life, ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων, not only for the good of the sheep, but *in their stead.* Thousands of sheep had been offered in sacrifice for their shepherds, as sin-offerings, but here, by a surprising reverse, the shepherd is sacrificed for the sheep. When David, the shepherd of Israel, was himself guilty, and the destroying angel drew his sword against the flock for his sake, with good reason did he plead, *These sheep, what evil have they done? Let thy hand be against me*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. But the Son of David was sinless and spotless; and his sheep, what evil have they not done? Yet he saith, *Let thine hand be against me.* Christ here seems to refer to that prophecy, Zech. xiii. 7, *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd;* and, though the smiting of the shepherd be for the present the *scattering* of the flock, it is in order to the gathering of them in.

(*b.*) He takes off the offence of the cross, which to many is a stone of stumbling, by four considerations:—

[*a.*] That his *laying down his life for the sheep* was the condition, the performance of which entitled him to the honours and powers of his exalted state (*v.* 17): "*Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life.* Upon these terms I am, as Mediator, to expect my Father's acceptance and approbation, and the glory designed me—that I become a sacrifice for the chosen remnant." Not but that, as the Son of God, he was beloved of his Father from eternity, but as *God-man*, as *Immanuel*, he was *therefore* beloved of the Father because he undertook to *die for the sheep; therefore* God's soul delighted in him as his elect because herein he was his *faithful servant* (Isa. xlii. 1); therefore he said, *This is my beloved Son.* What an instance is this of God's love to man, that he loved his Son the more for loving us! See what a value Christ puts upon his Father's love, that, to recommend himself to that, he would lay down his life for the sheep. Did he think God's love recompence sufficient for all his services and sufferings, and shall we think it too little for ours, and court the smiles of the world to make it up? *Therefore doth my Father love me*, that is, me, and all that by faith become one with me; me, and the mystical body, *because I lay down my life.*

[*b.*] That his laying down his life was in order to his resuming it: *I lay down my life, that I may receive it again. First*, This was the effect of his Father's love, and the first step of his exaltation, the fruit of that love. Because he was God's *holy one*, he must not *see corruption*, Ps. xvi. 10. God loved him too well to leave him in the grave. *Secondly*, This he had in his eye, in laying down his life, that he might have an opportunity of declaring himself to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection, Rom. i. 4. By a divine stratagem (like that before Ai, Josh. viii. 15) he yielded to death, as if he were smitten before it, that he might the more gloriously conquer death, and triumph over the grave. He laid down a *vilified* body, that he might assume a *glorified* one, fit to ascend to the world of spirits; laid down a life adapted to this world, but assumed one adapted to the other, like a corn of wheat, *ch.* xii. 24.

[*c.*] That he was perfectly voluntary in his sufferings and death (*v.* 18): "No one doth or can force my life from me against my will, but I freely *lay it down of myself*, I deliver it as my own act and deed, for I *have* (which no

man has) *power to lay it down, and to take it again.*"

1*st*, See here the power of Christ, as the Lord of life, particularly of his own life, which he had *in himself.* 1. He had power to *keep his life* against all the world, so that it could not be wrested from him without his own consent. Though Christ's life seemed to be taken by storm, yet really it was surrendered, otherwise it had been impregnable, and never taken. The Lord Jesus did not fall into the hands of his persecutors because he could not avoid it, but threw himself into their hands because his hour was come. *No man taketh my life from me.* This was such a challenge as was never given by the most daring hero. 2. He had power to *lay down his life.* (1.) He had ability to do it. He could, when he pleased, slip the knot of union between soul and body, and, without any act of violence done to himself, could disengage them from each other: having voluntarily *taken up* a body, he could voluntarily lay it down again, which appeared when he cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. (2.) He had authority to do it, ἐξουσίαν. Though we could find instruments of cruelty, wherewith to make an end of our own lives, yet *Id possumus quod jure possumus—we can do that, and that only, which we can do lawfully.* We are not at liberty to do it; but Christ had a sovereign authority to dispose of his own life as he pleased. He was no debtor (as we are) either to life or death, but perfectly *sui juris.* 3. He had power to *take it again;* we have not. Our life, once laid down, is *as water spilt upon the ground;* but Christ, when he laid down his life, still had it within reach, within call, and could resume it. Parting with it by a voluntary conveyance, he might limit the surrender at pleasure, and he did it with a power of revocation, which was necessary to preserve the intentions of the surrender.

2*ndly*, See here the grace of Christ; since none could demand his life of him by law, or extort it by force, he *laid it down of himself* for our redemption. He offered himself to be the Saviour: *Lo, I come;* and then, the necessity of our case calling for it, he offered himself to be a sacrifice: *Here am I, let these go their way; by which will we are sanctified,* Heb. x. 10. He was both the offerer and the offering, so that *his laying down his life* was his offering up himself.

[*d.*] That he did all this by the express order and appointment of his Father, into which he ultimately resolves the whole affair: *This commandment have I received of my Father;* not such a commandment as made what he did necessary, prior to his own voluntary undertaking; but this was the *law of mediation,* which he was willing to have *written in his heart,* so as to *delight* in doing *the will of God* according to it, Ps. xl. 8.

19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. 20 And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? 21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

We have here an account of the people's different sentiments concerning Christ, on occasion of the foregoing discourse; there was a division, a *schism,* among them; they differed in their opinions, which threw them into heats and parties. Such a ferment as this they had been in before (*ch.* vii. 43; ix. 16); and where there has once been a division a little thing will make a division again. Rents are sooner made than made up or mended. This division was occasioned by the sayings of Christ, which, one would think, should rather have united them all in him as their centre; but they set them at variance, as Christ foresaw, Luke xii. 51. But it is better that men should be *divided* about the doctrine of Christ than *united* in the service of sin, Luke xi. 21. See what the debate was in particular.

I. Some upon this occasion spoke ill of Christ and of his sayings, either openly in the face of the assembly, for his enemies were very impudent, or privately among themselves. They said, *He has a devil, and is mad, why do you hear him?* 1. They reproach him as a demoniac. The worst of characters is put upon the best of men. He is a distracted man, he raves and is delirious, and no more to be heard than the rambles of a man in bedlam. Thus still, if a man preaches seriously and pressingly of another world, he shall be said to talk like an enthusiast; and his conduct shall be imputed to fancy, a heated brain, and a crazed imagination. 2. They ridicule his hearers: "*Why hear you him?* Why do you so far encourage him as to take notice of what he says?" Note, Satan ruins many by putting them out of conceit with the word and ordinances, and representing it as a weak and silly thing to attend upon them. Men would not thus be laughed out of their necessary food, and yet suffer themselves to be laughed out of what is more necessary. Those that hear Christ, and mix faith with what they hear, will soon be able to give a good account *why they hear him.*

II. Others stood up in defence of him and his discourse, and, though the stream ran strong, dared to swim against it; and, though perhaps they did not believe on him as the Messiah, they could not bear to hear him thus abused. If they could say no more of him, this they would maintain, that he was a man in his wits, that he had not a devil, that he was neither senseless nor graceless. The absurd and most unreasonable reproaches, that have sometimes been cast upon Christ and his gospel, have excited those to appear for him and it who otherwise had no great affection to either. Two things they plead:

—1. The excellency of his doctrine: "*These are not the words of him that hath a devil;* they are not idle words; distracted men are not used to talk at this rate. These are not the words of one that is either violently possessed with a devil or voluntarily in league with the devil." Christianity, if it be not the true religion, is certainly the greatest cheat that ever was put upon the world; and, if so, it must be of the devil, who is the father of all lies: but it is certain that the doctrine of Christ is no doctrine of devils, for it is levelled directly against the devil's kingdom, and Satan is too subtle to be divided against himself. So much of holiness there is in the words of Christ that we may conclude they are *not the words of one that has a devil,* and therefore are the words of one that was sent of God; are not from hell, and therefore must be from heaven. 2. The power of his miracles: *Can a devil,* that is, a man that has a devil, *open the eyes of the blind?* Neither mad men nor bad men can work miracles. Devils are not such lords of the power of nature as to be able to work such miracles; nor are they such friends to mankind as to be willing to work them if they were able. The devil will sooner put out men's eyes than open them. Therefore Jesus *had not a devil.*

22 And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. 23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. 24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. 25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. 30 I and *my* Father are one. 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? 37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

We have here another rencounter between Christ and the Jews in the temple, in which it is hard to say which is more strange, the gracious words that came out of his mouth or the spiteful ones that came out of theirs.

I. We have here the time when this conference was: *It was at the feast of dedication, and it was winter,* a feast that was annually observed by consent, in remembrance of the dedication of a new altar and the purging of the temple, by Judas Maccabæus, after the temple had been profaned and the altar defiled; we have the story of it at large in the history of the Maccabees (*lib.* 1, *cap.* iv.); we have the prophecy of it, Dan. viii. 13, 14. See more of the feast, 2 Mac. i. 18. The return of their liberty was to them as life from the dead, and, in remembrance of it, they kept an annual feast on the twenty-fifth day of the month *Cisleu,* about the beginning of *December,* and seven days after. The celebrating of it was not confined to Jerusalem, as that of the divine feasts was, but every one observed it in his own place, not as a *holy time* (it is only a divine institution that can sanctify a day), but as a *good time,* as the days of Purim, Esth. ix. 19. Christ forecasted to be now at Jerusalem, not in honour of the feast, which did not require his attendance there, but that he might improve those eight days of vacation for good purposes.

II. The place where it was (*v.* 23): *Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch;* so called (Acts iii. 11), not because built by Solomon, but because built in the same place with that which had borne his name in the first temple, and the name was kept up for the greater reputation of it. Here Christ walked, to observe the proceedings of the great sanhedrim that sat here (Ps. lxxxii. 1); *he walked,* ready to give audience to any that should apply to him, and to offer them his services. He walked, as it should seem, for some time *alone,* as one neglected; walked pensive, in the foresight of the ruin of the temple. Those that have any thing to say to Christ may find him in the temple and walk with him there.

III. The conference itself, in which observe,

1. A weighty question put to him by the Jews, *v.* 24. They *came round about him,* to tease him; he was waiting for an opportunity to do them a kindness, and they took the opportunity to do him a mischief. Ill-will for good-will is no rare and uncommon return. He could not enjoy himself, no, not in the temple, his Father's house, without disturbance. They came about him, as it were, to lay siege to him: *encompassed him about like bees.* They came about him as if they had a joint and unanimous desire to be satisfied; came as one man, pretending an impartial and importunate enquiry after truth, but intending a general assault upon our Lord Jesus; and they seemed to speak the sense of their nation, as if they were the mouth of all the Jews: *How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ tell us.*

(1.) They quarrel with him, as if he had unfairly held them in suspense hitherto. Τὴν ψυχήν ἡμῶν αἴρεις;—*How long dost thou steal away our hearts?* Or, *take away our souls?* So some read it; basely intimating that what share he had of the people's love and respect he did not obtain fairly, but by indirect methods, as Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel; and as seducers deceive the *hearts of the simple,* and so *draw away disciples after them,* Rom. xvi. 18; Acts xx. 30. But most interpreters understand it as we do: "*How long dost thou keep us in suspense?* How long are we kept debating whether thou be the Christ or no, and not able to determine the question?" Now, [1.] It was the effect of their infidelity, and powerful prejudices, that after our Lord Jesus had so fully proved himself to be the Christ they were still in doubt concerning it; this they willingly hesitated about, when they might easily have been satisfied. The struggle was between their convictions, which told them he was Christ, and their corruptions, which said, No, because he was not such a Christ as they expected. Those who choose to be sceptics may, if they please, hold the balance so that the most cogent arguments may not weigh down the most trifling objections, but the scales may still hang even. [2.] It was an instance of their impudence and presumption that they laid the blame of their doubting upon Christ himself, as if he *made them to* doubt by inconsistency with himself, whereas in truth they made themselves doubt by indulging their prejudices. If Wisdom's sayings appear doubtful, the fault is not in the object, but in the eye; they are all *plain to him that understands.* Christ would make us to believe; we make ourselves to *doubt.*

(2.) They challenge him to give a direct and categorical answer whether he was the Messiah or no: "*If thou be the Christ,* as many believe thou art, *tell us plainly,* not by parables, as, *I am the light of the world,* and *the good Shepherd,* and the like, but *totidem verbis—in so many words,* either that thou art the Christ, or, as John Baptist, that thou art not," *ch.* i. 20. Now this pressing query of theirs was *seemingly good;* they pretended to be desirous to know the truth, as if they were ready to embrace it; but it was *really bad,* and put with an ill design; for, if he should tell them plainly that he was the Christ, there needed no more to make him obnoxious to the jealousy and severity of the Roman government. Every one knew the Messiah was to be a king, and therefore whoever pretended to be the Messiah would be prosecuted as a traitor, which was the thing they would have been at; for, let him tell them ever so plainly that he was the Christ, they would have this to say presently, *Thou bearest witness of thyself,* as they had said, *ch.* viii. 13.

2. Christ's answer to this question, in which,

(1.) He justifies himself as not at all accessary to their infidelity and scepticism, referring them, [1.] To what he had said: *I have told you.* He had told them that he was the Son of God, the Son of man, that he had life in himself, that he had *authority to execute judgment,* &c. And is not this the Christ then? These things he had told them, and they believed not; why then should they be told them again, merely to gratify their curiosity? *You believed not.* They pretended that they only doubted, but Christ tells them that they did not believe. Scepticism in religion is no better than downright infidelity. It is not for us to teach God how he should teach us, nor prescribe to him how plainly he should tell us his mind, but to be thankful for divine revelation as we have it. If we do not believe this, neither should we be persuaded if it were ever so much adapted to our humour. [2.] He refers them to his works, to the example of his life, which was not only perfectly pure, but highly beneficent, and of a piece with his doctrine; and especially to his miracles, which he wrought for the confirmation of his doctrine. It was certain that no man could do those miracles except God were with him, and God would not be with him to attest a forgery.

(2.) He condemns them for their obstinate unbelief, notwithstanding all the most plain and powerful arguments used to convince them: "*You believed not;* and again, *You believed not.* You still are what you always were, obstinate in your unbelief." But the reason he gives is very surprising: "*You believed not, because you are not of my sheep:* you believe not in me, because you belong not to me." [1.] "You are not disposed to be my followers, are not of a tractable teachable temper, have no inclination to receive the doctrine and law of the Messiah; you will not herd yourselves with my sheep, will not come and see, come and hear my voice." Rooted antipathies to the gospel of Christ are

the bonds of iniquity and infidelity. [2.] "You are not *designed* to be my followers; you are not of those that were given me by my Father, to be brought to grace and glory. You are not of the number of the elect; and your unbelief, if you persist in it, will be a certain evidence that you are not." Note, Those to whom God never gives the grace of faith were never designed for heaven and happiness. What Solomon saith of immorality is true of infidelity, It is *a deep ditch, and he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein,* Prov. xxii. 14. *Non esse electum, non est causa incredulitatis propriè dicta, sed causa per accidens. Fides autem est donum Dei et effectus prædestinationis—The not being included among the elect is not the* proper *cause of infidelity, but merely the* accidental *cause. But faith is the gift of God, and the effect of predestination.* So Jansenius distinguishes well here.

(3.) He takes this occasion to describe both the gracious disposition and the happy state of those that are his sheep; for such there are, though *they* be not.

[1.] To convince them that they were not his sheep, he tells them what were the characters of his sheep. *First,* They *hear his voice* (*v.* 27), for they know it to be his (*v.* 4), and he has undertaken that they shall hear it, *v.* 16. They discern it, *It is the voice of my beloved,* Cant. ii. 8. They delight in it, are in their element when they are sitting at his feet to hear his word. They do according to it, and make his word their rule. Christ will not account those his sheep that are deaf to his calls, deaf to his charms, Ps. lviii. 5. *Secondly,* They *follow him;* they submit to his guidance by a willing obedience to all his commands, and a cheerful conformity to his spirit and pattern. The word of command has always been, *Follow me.* We must eye him as our leader and captain, and *tread in his steps,* and walk as he walked—follow the prescriptions of his word, the intimations of his providence, and the directions of his Spirit—*follow the Lamb* (the *dux gregis—the leader of the flock) whithersoever he goes.* In vain do we *hear his voice* if we do not *follow him.*

[2.] To convince them that it was their great unhappiness and misery not to be of Christ's sheep, he here describes the blessed state and case of those that are, which would likewise serve for the support and comfort of his poor despised followers, and keep them from envying the power and grandeur of those that were not of his sheep.

First, Our Lord Jesus *takes cognizance* of his sheep: They *hear my voice,* and *I know them.* He distinguishes them from others (2 Tim. ii. 19), has a particular regard to every individual (Ps. xxxiv. 6); he knows their wants and desires, knows their souls in adversity, where to find them, and what to do for them. He knows others afar off, but knows them near at hand.

Secondly, He has provided a happiness for them, suited to them: *I give unto them eternal life, v.* 28. 1. The estate settled upon them is rich and valuable; it is life, eternal life. Man has a living soul; therefore the happiness provided is life, suited to his nature. Man has an immortal soul: therefore the happiness provided is eternal life, running parallel with his duration. *Life eternal* is the felicity and chief good of a *soul immortal.* 2. The manner of conveyance is *free: I give it* to them; it is not bargained and sold upon a valuable consideration, but given by the free grace of Jesus Christ. The donor has power to give it. He who is the fountain of life, and Father of eternity, has authorized Christ to give eternal life, *ch.* xvii. 2. Not *I will* give it, but *I do* give it; it is a present gift. He gives the assurance of it, the pledge and earnest of it, the first-fruits and foretastes of it, that *spiritual* life which is *eternal* life begun, heaven in the seed, in the bud, in the embryo.

Thirdly, He has undertaken for their security and preservation to this happiness.

a. They shall be *saved from everlasting perdition. They shall by no means perish for ever;* so the words are. As there is an eternal life, so there is an eternal destruction; the soul not *annihilated,* but *ruined;* its being continued, but its comfort and happiness irrecoverably lost. All believers are saved from this; whatever cross they may come under, they shall not *come into condemnation.* A man is never undone till he is in hell, and they shall not go down to that. Shepherds that have large flocks often lose some of the sheep and suffer them to perish; but Christ has engaged that none of his sheep shall perish, not one.

b. They cannot be kept from their *everlasting happiness;* it is in reserve, but he that gives it to them will preserve them to it. (*a.*) His own power is engaged for them: *Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* A mighty contest is here supposed about these sheep. The Shepherd is so careful of their welfare that he has them not only within his fold, and under his eye, but *in his hand,* interested in his special love and taken under his special protection *(all his saints are in thy hand,* Deut. xxxiii. 3); yet their enemies are so daring that they attempt to pluck them out of his hand—*his* whose *own* they are, whose *care* they are; but they cannot, they shall not, do it. Note, Those are safe who are in the hands of the Lord Jesus. The saints are *preserved in Christ Jesus:* and their salvation is not in their own keeping, but in the keeping of a Mediator. The Pharisees and rulers did all they could to frighten the disciples of Christ from following him, reproving and threatening them, but Christ saith that they shall not prevail. (*b.*) His Father's power is likewise engaged for their preservation, *v.* 29. He now appeared in weakness, and, lest his

security should therefore be thought *insufficient*, he brings in his Father as a further security. Observe, [*a.*] The power of the Father: *My Father is greater than all;* greater than all the other *friends* of the church, all the other shepherds, magistrates or ministers, and able to do that for them which they cannot do. Those shepherds slumber and sleep, and it will be easy to pluck the sheep out of their hands; but he keeps his flock day and night. He is greater than all the enemies of the church, all the opposition given to her interests, and able to secure his own against all their insults; he is *greater than all* the combined force of hell and earth. He is greater in wisdom than the *old serpent*, though noted for subtlety; greater in strength than the great red dragon, though his name be *legion*, and his title *principalities and powers.* The devil and his angels have had many a push, many a pluck for the mastery, but have never yet prevailed, Rev. xii. 7, 8. *The Lord on high is mightier.* [*b.*] The interest of the Father in the sheep, for the sake of which this power is engaged for them: "It is my Father *that gave them to me*, and he is concerned in honour to uphold his gift." They were given to the Son as a trust to be managed by him, and therefore God will still look after them. All the divine power is engaged for the accomplishment of all the divine counsels. [*c.*] The safety of the saints inferred from these two. If this be so, then *none* (neither man nor devil) is *able to pluck them out of the Father's hand*, not able to deprive them of the grace they have, nor to hinder them from the glory that is designed them; not able to put them out of God's protection, nor get them into their own power. Christ had himself experienced the power of his Father *upholding* and *strengthening* him, and therefore puts all his followers into his hand too. He that secured the glory of the Redeemer will secure the glory of the redeemed. Further to corroborate the security, that the sheep of Christ may have strong consolation, he asserts the union of these two undertakers: "*I and my Father are one*, and have jointly and severally undertaken for the protection of the saints and their perfection." This denotes more than the harmony, and consent, and good understanding, that were between the Father and the Son in the work of man's redemption. Every good man is so far one with God as to concur with him; therefore it must be meant of the *oneness of the nature* of Father and Son, that they are the same in substance, and equal in power and glory. The fathers urged this both against the Sabellians, to prove the distinction and plurality of the persons, that the Father and the Son are two, and against the Arians, to prove the unity of the nature, that these two are *one.* If we should altogether hold our peace concerning this sense of the words, even the stones which the Jews took up to cast at him would speak it out, for the Jews understood him as hereby making himself God (*v.* 33) and he did not deny it. He proves that none could pluck them out *of his hand* because they could not pluck them out *of the Father's hand*, which had not been a conclusive argument if the Son had not had the same almighty power with the Father, and consequently been one with him in essence and operation.

IV. The rage, the outrage, of the Jews against him for this discourse: *The Jews took up stones again, v.* 31. It is not the word that is used before (*ch.* viii. 59), but ἐβάσασαν λίθους—*they carried stones*—great stones, stones that were a *load*, such as they used in stoning malefactors. They *brought* them from some place at a distance, as it were preparing things for his execution without any judicial process; as if he were convicted of blasphemy upon the notorious evidence of the fact, which needed no further trial. The absurdity of this insult which the Jews offered to Christ will appear if we consider, 1. That they had *imperiously*, not to say *impudently*, challenged him to tell them plainly whether he was the Christ or no; and yet now that he not only said *he* was the Christ, but proved himself so, they condemned him as a malefactor. If the preachers of the truth propose it *modestly*, they are branded as cowards; if *boldly*, as insolent; but *Wisdom is justified of her children.* 2. That when they had before made a similar attempt it was in vain; he *escaped through the midst of them* (*ch.* viii. 59); yet they repeat their baffled attempt. Daring sinners will throw stones at heaven, though they return upon their own heads; and will strengthen themselves against the Almighty, though none ever hardened themselves against him and prospered.

V. Christ's tender expostulation with them upon occasion of this outrage (*v.* 32): *Jesus answered* what they *did*, for we do not find that they *said any thing*, unless perhaps they stirred up the crowd that they had gathered about him to join with them, crying, *Stone him, stone him*, as afterwards, *Crucify him, crucify him.* When he could have answered them with fire from heaven, he mildly replied, *Many good works have I shown you from my Father: for which of those works do you stone me?* Words so very tender that one would think they should have melted a heart of stone. In dealing with his enemies he still argued from his works (men evidence what they *are* by what they *do*), his *good works*—καλὰ ἔργα, excellent, eminent works. *Opera eximia vel præclara;* the expression signifies both *great works* and *good works.*

1. The divine power of his works convicted them of the most obstinate infidelity. They were works *from his Father*, so far above the reach and course of nature as to prove him who did them *sent of God*, and acting by commission from him. These works

he *showed* them; he did them openly before the people, and not in a corner. His works would bear the test, and refer themselves to the testimony of the most inquisitive and impartial spectators. He did not show his works by candle-light, as those that are concerned only for *show*, but he showed them at noon-day before the world, *ch.* xviii. 20. See Ps. cxi. 6. His works so undeniably *demonstrated* that they were an incontestable *demonstration* of the validity of his commission.

2. The divine grace of his works convicted them of the most base ingratitude. The works he did among them were not only miracles, but mercies; not only works of wonder to amaze them, but works of love and kindness to do them good, and so make them good, and endear himself to them. He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, cast out devils, which were favours, not only to the persons concerned, but to the public; these he had repeated, and multiplied: "*Now, for which of these do you stone me?* You cannot say that I have done you any harm, or given you any just provocation; if therefore you will pick a quarrel with me, it must be for some good work, some good turn done you; tell me for which." Note, (1.) The horrid ingratitude that there is in our sins against God and Jesus Christ is a great aggravation of them, and makes them appear exceedingly sinful. See how God argues to this purpose, Deut. xxxii. 6; Jer. ii. 5; Mic. vi. 3. (2.) We must not think it strange if we meet with those who not only hate us without cause, but are our adversaries for our love, Ps. xxxv. 12; xli. 9. When he asks, *For which of these do you stone me?* as he intimates the abundant satisfaction he had in his own innocency, which gives a man courage in a suffering day, so he puts his persecutors upon considering what was the true reason of their enmity, and asking, as all those should do that create trouble to their neighbour, *Why persecute we him?* As Job advises his friends to do, Job xix. 28

VI. Their vindication of the attempt they made upon Christ, and the cause upon which they grounded their prosecution, *v.* 33. What sin will want fig-leaves with which to cover itself, when even the bloody persecutors of the Son of God could find something to say for themselves?

1. They would not be thought such enemies to their country as to persecute him for a good work: *For a good work we stone thee not.* For indeed they would scarcely allow any of his works to be so. His curing the impotent man (*ch.* v.) and the blind man (*ch.* ix.) were so far from being acknowledged good services to the town, and meritorious, that they were put upon the score of his crimes, because done on the sabbath day. But, if he had done any good works, they would not own that they stoned him *for them*, though these were really the things that did most exasperate them, *ch.* xi. 47. Thus, though most absurd, they could not be brought to own their absurdities.

2. They would be thought such friends to God and his glory as to prosecute him for blasphemy: *Because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* Here is,

(1.) A pretended zeal for the law. They seem mightily concerned for the honour of the divine majesty, and to be seized with a religious horror at that which they imagined to be a reproach to it. A blasphemer was to be *stoned*, Lev. xxiv. 16. This law, they thought, did not only justify, but sanctify, what they attempted, as Acts xxvi. 9. Note, The vilest practices are often varnished with plausible pretences. As nothing is more *courageous* than a well-informed conscience, so nothing is more *outrageous* than a mistaken one. See Isa. lxvi. 5; *ch.* xvi. 2.

(2.) A real enmity to the gospel, on which they could not put a greater affront than by representing Christ as a blasphemer. It is no new thing for the worst of characters to be put upon the best of men, by those that resolve to give them the worst of treatment. [1.] The crime laid to his charge is *blasphemy*, speaking reproachfully and despitefully of God. God himself is out of the sinner's reach, and not capable of receiving any real injury; and therefore enmity to God spits its venom at his name, and so shows its ill-will. [2.] The proof of the crime: *Thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* As it is God's glory that *he is God*, which we rob him of when we make him altogether such a one as ourselves, so it is his glory that *besides him there is no other*, which we rob him of when we make ourselves, or any creature, altogether like him. Now, *First*, Thus far they were in the right, that what Christ said of himself amounted to this—that he was God, for he had said that he was *one with the Father* and that he would *give eternal life;* and Christ does not deny it, which he would have done if it had been a mistaken inference from his words. But, *Secondly*, They were much mistaken when they looked upon him as a *mere man*, and that the Godhead he claimed was a usurpation, and of his own making. They thought it absurd and impious that such a one as he, who appeared in the fashion of a poor, mean, despicable man, should profess himself the Messiah, and entitle himself to the honours confessedly due to the Son of God. Note, 1. Those who say that Jesus is a *mere man*, and only a *made God*, as the Socinians say, do in effect charge *him* with blasphemy, but do effectually prove it upon themselves. 2. He who, being a man, a sinful man, makes himself a god as the Pope does, who claims divine powers and prerogatives, is unquestionably a *blasphemer*, and *that* antichrist.

VII. Christ's reply to their accusation of him (for such their vindication of themselves was), and his making good those claims which they imputed to him as blasphemous

(*v.* 34, &c.), where he proves himself to be no blasphemer, by two arguments:—

1. By an argument taken from *God's word.* He appeals to what was *written in their law,* that is, in the Old Testament; whoever opposes Christ, he is sure to have the scripture *on his side.* It is written (Ps. lxxxii. 6), *I have said, You are gods.* It is an argument *a minore ad majus—from the less to the greater.* If they were gods, much more am I. Observe,

(1.) How he explains the text (*v.* 35): *He called them gods to whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken.* The word of God's commission came to them, appointing them to their offices, as judges, and therefore they are called *gods,* Exod. xxii. 28. To some the word of God came immediately, as to Moses; to others in the way of an instituted ordinance. Magistracy is a divine institution; and magistrates are God's delegates, and therefore the scripture calleth them gods; and we are sure that the scripture *cannot be broken,* or broken in upon, or found fault with. Every word of God is *right;* the very style and language of scripture are unexceptionable, and not to be corrected, Matt. v. 18.

(2.) How he applies it. Thus much in general is easily inferred, that those were very rash and unreasonable who condemned Christ as a blasphemer, only for calling himself the Son of God, when yet they themselves called their rulers so, and therein the scripture warranted them. But the argument goes further (*v.* 36): If magistrates were called gods, because they were commissioned to administer justice in the nation, *say you of him whom the Father hath sanctified, Thou blasphemest?* We have here two things concerning the Lord Jesus:—[1.] The honour done him by the *Father,* which he justly glories in: He *sanctified him,* and *sent him into the world.* Magistrates were called *the sons of God,* though the word of God only came to them, and the spirit of government came upon them by measure, as upon Saul; but our Lord Jesus was himself the *Word,* and had the *Spirit without measure.* They were constituted for a particular country, city, or nation; but he was sent *into the world,* vested with a universal authority, as Lord of all. They were *sent to,* as persons at a distance; he was *sent forth,* as having been from eternity with God. The Father *sanctified him,* that is, designed him and set him apart to the office of Mediator, and qualified and fitted him for that office. *Sanctifying* him is the same with *sealing* him, *ch.* vi. 27. Note, Whom the Father sends he sanctifies; whom he designs for holy purposes he prepares with holy principles and dispositions. The holy God will reward, and therefore will employ, none but such as he finds or makes holy. The Father's sanctifying and sending him is here vouched as a sufficient warrant for his calling himself the *Son of God;* for because he was a *holy thing* he was *called the Son of God,* Luke i. 35. See Rom. i. 4. [2.] The dishonour done him by the Jews, which he justly complains of—that they impiously said of him, whom the Father had thus dignified, that he was a *blasphemer,* because he called himself the *Son of God:* "*Say you of him* so and so? Dare you say so? Dare you thus set your mouths against the heavens? Have you brow and brass enough to tell the God of truth that he lies, or *to condemn him that is most just?* Look me in the face, and say it if you can. What! say you of the Son of God that *he is a blasphemer?*" If devils, whom he came to condemn, had said so of him, it had not been so strange; but that *men,* whom he came to teach and save, should say so of him, *be astonished, O heavens! at this.* See what is the language of an obstinate unbelief; it does, in effect, call the holy Jesus a blasphemer. It is hard to say which is more to be wondered at, that men who breathe in God's air should yet speak such things, or that men who have spoken such things should still be suffered to breathe in God's air. The wickedness of man, and the patience of God, as it were, contend which shall be most *wonderful.*

2. By an argument taken from *his own works, v.* 37, 38. In the former he only answered the charge of blasphemy by an argument *ad hominem—turning a man's own argument against himself;* but he here makes out his own claims, and proves that he and the Father are one (*v.* 37, 38): *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* Though he might justly have abandoned such blasphemous wretches as incurable, yet he vouchsafes to reason with them. Observe,

(1.) *From what* he argues—from his works, which he had often vouched as his credentials, and the proofs of his mission. As he proved himself sent of God by the *divinity* of his works, so we must prove ourselves allied to Christ by the *Christianity* of ours. [1.] The argument is very cogent; for the works he did were the *works of his Father,* which the Father only could do, and which could not be done in the ordinary course of nature, but only by the sovereign over-ruling power of the God of nature. *Opera Deo propria—works peculiar to God,* and *Opera Deo digna—works worthy of God*—the works of a divine power. He that can dispense with the laws of nature, repeal, alter, and overrule them at his pleasure, by his own power, is certainly the sovereign prince who first instituted and enacted those laws. The miracles which the apostles wrought in his name, by his power, and for the confirmation of his doctrine, corroborated this argument, and continued the evidence of it when he was gone. [2.] It is proposed as fairly as can be desired, and put to a short issue. *First, If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* He does not demand a blind and implicit faith, nor an assent to his divine mission further

than he gave proof of it. He did not wind himself into the affections of the people, nor wheedle them by sly insinuations, nor impose upon their credulity by bold assertions, but with the greatest fairness imaginable quitted all demands of their faith, further than he produced warrants for these demands. Christ is no hard master, who expects to reap in assents where he has not sown in arguments. None shall perish for the disbelief of that which was not proposed to them with sufficient motives of credibility, Infinite Wisdom itself being judge. *Secondly,* "But if I do *the works of my Father, if I work* undeniable miracles for the confirmation of a holy doctrine, *though you believe not me,* though you are so scrupulous as not to take my word, yet *believe the works:* believe your own eyes, your own reason; the thing speaks itself plainly enough." As the invisible things of the Creator are clearly seen by his works of creation and common providence (Rom. i. 20), so the invisible things of the Redeemer were seen by his miracles, and by all his works both of power and mercy; so that those who were not convinced by these works were *without excuse.*

(2.) *For what* he argues—*that you may know and believe,* may believe it intelligently, and with an entire satisfaction, that *the Father is in me and I in him;* which is the same with what he had said (*v.* 30): *I and my Father are one.* The Father was so in the Son as that in him *dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead,* and it was by a divine power that he wrought his miracles; the Son was so in the Father as that he was perfectly acquainted with the whole of his mind, not by communication, but by consciousness, having lain in his bosom. This we must *know;* not know and *explain* (for we cannot by searching find it out to perfection), but know and *believe* it; acknowledging and adoring the depth, when we cannot find the bottom.

39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, 40 And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. 41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. 42 And many believed on him there.

We have here the issue of the conference with the Jews. One would have thought it would have convinced and melted them, but their hearts were hardened. Here we are told,

I. How they attacked him by force. Therefore *they sought again to take him,* *v.* 39. Therefore, 1. Because he had fully answered their charge of blasphemy, and wiped off that imputation, so that they could not for shame go on with their attempts to stone him, therefore they contrived to seize him, and prosecute him as an offender against the state. When they were constrained to drop their attempt by a popular tumult, they would try what they could do under colour of a legal process. See Rev. xii. 13. Or, 2. Because he persevered in the same testimony concerning himself, they persisted in their malice against him. What he had said before he did in effect say again, for the *faithful witness* never departs from what he has once said; and therefore, having the same provocation, they express the same resentment, and justify their attempt to stone him by another attempt to take him. Such is the temper of a persecuting spirit, and such its policy, *malè facta malè factis tegere ne perpluant—to cover one set of bad deeds with another, lest the former should fall through.*

II. How he avoided them by flight; not an inglorious retreat, in which there was any thing of human infirmity, but a glorious retirement, in which there was much of a divine power. He *escaped out of their hands,* not by the interposal of any friend that helped him, but by his own wisdom he *got clear* of them; he drew a veil over himself, or cast a mist before their eyes, or tied the hands of those whose hearts he did not turn. Note, No weapon formed against our Lord Jesus shall prosper, Ps. ii. 4. He *escaped,* not because he was afraid to suffer, but because *his hour was not come.* And he who knew how to *deliver himself* no doubt knows how to *deliver the godly out of temptation,* and to make *a way for them to escape.*

III. How he disposed of himself in his retirement: He *went away again beyond Jordan,* *v.* 40. The bishop of our souls came not to be fixed in one see, but to go about from place to place, doing good. This great benefactor was never out of his way, for wherever he came there was work to be done. Though Jerusalem was the royal city, yet he made many a kind visit to the country, not only to his own country Galilee, but to other parts, even those that lay most remote beyond Jordan. Now observe,

1. What *shelter* he found there. He went into a private part of the country, and *there he abode;* there he found some rest and quietness, when in Jerusalem he could find none. Note, Though persecutors may drive Christ and his gospel out of their own city or country, they cannot drive him or it out of the world. Though Jerusalem was not gathered, nor would be, yet Christ was glorious, and would be. Christ's going now beyond Jordan was a figure of the taking of the kingdom of God from the Jews, and bringing it to the Gentiles. Christ and his gospel have often found better entertainment among the plain country-people than among *the wise, the mighty, the noble,* 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.

2. What *success* he found there. He did not go thither merely for his own security,

but to do good there; and he chose to go thither, where John at first baptized (*ch.* i. 28), because there could not but remain some impressions of John's ministry and baptism thereabouts, which would dispose them to receive Christ and his doctrine; for it was not three years since John was baptizing, and Christ was himself baptized here at Bethabara. Christ came hither now to see what fruit there was of all the pains John Baptist had taken among them, and what they retained of the things they then heard and received. The event in some measure answered expectation; for we are told,

(1.) That they flocked after him (*v.* 41): *Many resorted to him.* The return of the means of grace to a place, after they have been for some time intermitted, commonly occasions a great stirring of affections. Some think Christ chose to *abide* at *Bethabara,* the *house of passage,* where the ferry-boats lay by which they crossed the river Jordan, that the confluence of people thither might give an opportunity of teaching many who would come to hear him when it *lay in their way,* but who would scarcely go a step out of the road for an opportunity of attending on his word.

(2.) That they reasoned in his favour, and sought arguments to induce them to close with him as much as those at Jerusalem sought objections against him. They said very judiciously, *John did no miracle, but all things that John spoke of this man were true.* Two things they considered, upon recollecting what they had seen and heard from John, and comparing it with Christ's ministry. [1.] That Christ far exceeded John Baptist's power, for *John did no miracle,* but Jesus does many; whence it is easy to infer that Jesus is greater than John. And, if John was so great a prophet, how great then is this Jesus! Christ is best known and acknowledged by such a comparison with others as sets him superlatively above others. Though John came in the spirit and power of Elias, yet he did not work miracles, as Elias did, lest the minds of people should be made to hesitate between him and Jesus; therefore the honour of working miracles was reserved for Jesus as a flower of his crown, that there might be a sensible demonstration, an *undeniable* one, that though he came after John, yet he was *preferred far before him.* [2.] That Christ exactly answered John Baptist's testimony. John not only *did no miracle* to *divert* people from Christ, but he said a great deal to direct them to Christ, and to turn them over as apprentices to him, and this came to their minds *now:* all things that *John said of this man were true,* that he should be the *Lamb of God,* should *baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* Great things John had said of him, which raised their expectations; so that though they had not zeal enough to carry them into his country to enquire after him, yet, when he came into theirs, and brought his gospel to their doors, they acknowledged him as great as John had said he would be. When we get acquainted with Christ, and come to know him experimentally, we find all things that the scripture saith of him to be true; nay, and that the reality exceeds the report, 1 Kings, x. 6, 7. John Baptist was now dead and gone, and yet his hearers profited by what they had heard formerly, and, by comparing what they heard then with what they saw now, they gained a double advantage; for, *First,* They were confirmed in their belief that *John was a prophet,* who foretold such things, and spoke of the eminency to which this Jesus would arrive, though his beginning was so small. *Secondly,* They were prepared to believe that *Jesus was the Christ,* in whom they saw those things accomplished which John foretold. By this we see that the success and efficacy of the word preached are not confined to the life of the preacher, nor do they expire with his breath, but that which seemed as *water spilt upon the ground* may afterwards be *gathered up again.* See Zech. i. 5, 6.

(3.) That many believed on him there. Believing that he who wrought such miracles, and in whom John's predictions were fulfilled, was what he declared himself to be, the Son of God, they gave up themselves to him as his disciples, v. 42. An emphasis is here to be laid, [1.] Upon the persons that believed on him; they were *many.* While those that received and embraced his doctrine at Jerusalem were but as the grape-gleanings of the vintage, those that believed on him in the country, beyond the Jordan, were a full harvest gathered in to him. [2.] Upon the place where this was; it was where John had been preaching and baptizing and had had great success; *there* many believed on the Lord Jesus. Where the preaching of the doctrine of repentance has had success, as desired, there the preaching of the doctrine of reconciliation and gospel grace is most likely to be prosperous. Where John has been acceptable, Jesus will not be unacceptable. The jubilee-trumpet sounds sweetest in the ears of those who in the day of atonement have afflicted their souls for sin.

CHAP. XI.

In this chapter we have the history of that illustrious miracle which Christ wrought a little before his death—the raising of Lazarus to life, which is recorded only by this evangelist; for the other three confine themselves to what Christ did in Galilee, where he resided most, and scarcely ever carried their history into Jerusalem till the passion-week: whereas John's memoirs relate chiefly to what passed at Jerusalem; this passage therefore was reserved for his pen. Some suggest that, when the other evangelists wrote, Lazarus was alive, and it would not well agree either with his safety or with his humility to have it recorded till now, when it is supposed he was dead. It is more largely recorded than any other of Christ's miracles, not only because there are many circumstances of it so very instructive and the miracle of itself so great a proof of Christ's mission, but because it was an earnest of that which was to be the crowning proof of all—Christ's own resurrection. Here is, I. The tidings sent to our Lord Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus, and his entertainment of those tidings, ver. 1—16. II. The visit he made to Lazarus's relations when he had heard of his death, and their entertainment

of the visit, ver. 17—32. III. The miracle wrought in the raising of Lazarus from the dead, ver. 33—44. IV. The effect wrought by this miracle upon others, ver. 45—57.

NOW a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) 3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. 4 When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. 5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. 6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. 7 Then after that saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go into Judæa again. 8 *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? 9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. 10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. 11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. 12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. 13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. 14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. 16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

We have in these verses,

I. A particular account of the parties principally concerned in this story, *v.* 1, 2. 1. They lived at *Bethany*, a village not far from Jerusalem, where Christ usually lodged when he came up to the feasts. It is here called the *town of Mary and Martha*, that is, the town where they dwelt, as Bethsaida is called the *city of Andrew and Peter*, *ch.* i. 44. For I see no reason to think, as some do, that Martha and Mary were owners of the town, and the rest were *their* tenants. 2. Here was a brother named *Lazarus;* his *Hebrew* name probably was *Eleazar*, which being contracted, and a Greek termination put to it, is made *Lazarus*. Perhaps in prospect of this history our Saviour made use of the name of *Lazarus* in that parable wherein he designed to set forth the blessedness of the righteous in the bosom of Abraham immediately after death, Luke xvi. 22. 3. Here were two sisters, *Martha* and *Mary*, who seem to have been the housekeepers, and to have managed the affairs of the family, while perhaps Lazarus lived a retired life, and gave himself to study and contemplation. Here was a decent, happy, well-ordered family, and a family that Christ was very much conversant with, where yet there was neither husband nor wife (for aught that appears), but the house kept by a brother, and his sisters dwelling together in unity. 4. One of the sisters is particularly described to be *that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment*, *v.* 2. Some think she was that woman that we read of, Luke vii. 37, 38, who had been a *sinner*, a bad woman. I rather think it refers to that anointing of Christ which this evangelist relates (*ch.* xii. 3); for the evangelists do never refer one to another, but John frequently refers in one place of his gospel to another. Extraordinary acts of piety and devotion, that come from an honest principle of love to Christ, will not only find acceptance with him, but gain reputation in the church, Matt. xxvi. 13. This was she *whose brother Lazarus was sick;* and the sickness of those we love is our affliction. The more friends we have the more frequently we are thus afflicted by sympathy; and the dearer they are the more grievous it is. The multiplying of our comforts is but the multiplying of our cares and crosses.

II. The tidings that were sent to our Lord Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus, *v.* 3. *His sisters* knew where Jesus was, a great way off beyond Jordan, and they sent a special messenger to him, to acquaint him with the affliction of their family, in which they manifest, 1. The affection and concern they had for their brother. Though, it is likely, his estate would come to them after his death, yet they earnestly desired his life, as they ought to do. They showed their love to him now that he was sick, for a *brother is born for adversity*, and so is a sister too. We must weep with our friends when they weep, as well as rejoice with them when they rejoice. 2. The regard they had to the Lord Jesus, whom they were willing to make acquainted with all their concerns, and, like Jephthah, to utter all their words before him. Though God knows all our wants, and griefs, and cares, he will know them from us, and is honoured by our laying them before him.

The message they sent was very short, not *petitioning*, much less *prescribing* or *pressing*, but barely relating the case with the tender insinuation of a powerful plea, *Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.* They do not say, He whom *we* love, but *he whom thou lovest.* Our greatest encouragements in prayer are fetched from God himself and from his grace. They do not say, Lord, behold, he *who loveth thee*, but *he whom thou lovest;* for *herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.* Our love to him is not worth speaking of, but his to us can never be enough spoken of. Note, (1.) There are some of the friends and followers of the Lord Jesus for whom he has a special kindness above others. Among the twelve there was one whom Jesus loved. (2.) It is no new thing for those whom Christ loves to be sick: all things come alike to all. Bodily distempers correct the corruption, and try the graces, of God's people. (3.) It is a great comfort to us, when we are sick, to have those about us that will pray for us. (4.) We have great encouragement in our prayers for those who are sick, if we have ground to hope that they are such as Christ loves; and we have reason to love and pray for those whom we have reason to think Christ loves and cares for.

III. An account how Christ entertained the tidings brought him of the illness of his friend.

1. He prognosticated the event and issue of the sickness, and probably sent it as a message to the sisters of Lazarus by the express, to support them while he delayed to come to them. Two things he prognosticates:—

(1.) *This sickness is not unto death.* It was mortal, proved *fatal*, and no doubt but Lazarus was truly dead for four days. But, [1.] That was not the errand upon which this sickness was sent; it came not, as in a common case, to be a summons to the grave, but there was a further intention in it. Had it been sent on that errand, his *rising from the dead would have defeated it.* [2.] That was not the final effect of this sickness. He *died*, and yet it might be said he did not *die*, for *factum non dicitur quod non perseverat—That is not said to be done which is not done for a perpetuity.* Death is an everlasting farewell to this world; it is the way whence we shall not return; and in this sense it was *not unto death.* The grave was not his *long home*, his *house of eternity.* Thus Christ said of the maid whom he proposed to restore to life, *She is not dead.* The sickness of good people, how threatening soever, is *not unto death*, for it is not unto *eternal* death. The body's death to this world is the soul's birth into another world; when we or our friends are sick, we make it our principal support that there is hope of a recovery, but in that we may be disappointed; therefore it is our wisdom to build upon that in which we cannot be disappointed; if they belong to Christ, let the worst come to the worst, they cannot be *hurt of the second death*, and then not much hurt of the first.

(2.) *But it is for the glory of God*, that an opportunity may be given for the manifesting of God's glorious power. The afflictions of the saints are designed for the glory of God, that he may have opportunity of showing them favour; for the sweetest mercies, and the most affecting, are those which are occasioned by trouble. Let this reconcile us to the darkest dispensations of Providence, they are all for the glory of God, this sickness, this loss, or this disappointment, is so; and, if God be glorified, we ought to be satisfied, Lev. x. 3. It was for the glory of God, for it was *that the Son of God might be glorified thereby*, as it gave him occasion to work that glorious miracle, the *raising of him from the dead.* As, before, the man was *born blind* that Christ might have the honour of curing him (*ch.* ix. 3), so Lazarus must be sick and die, that Christ may be glorified as the Lord of life. Let this comfort those whom Christ loves under all their grievances that the design of them all is that *the Son of God may be glorified thereby*, his wisdom, power, and goodness, glorified in supporting and relieving them; see 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.

2. He deferred visiting his patient, *v.* 5, 6. They had pleaded, *Lord, it is he whom thou lovest*, and the plea is allowed (*v.* 5): *Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.* Thus the claims of faith are ratified in the court of heaven. Now one would think it should follow, *When he heard therefore that he was sick* he made all the haste that he could to him; if he loved them, now was a time to show it by hastening to them, for he knew they impatiently expected him. But he took the contrary way to show his love: it is not said, He loved them and *yet* he lingered; but he loved them and *therefore* he lingered; when he heard that his friend was sick, instead of coming post to him, he abode *two days still in the same place where he was.* (1.) He *loved them*, that is, had a great opinion of Martha and Mary, of their wisdom and grace, of their faith and patience, above others of his disciples, and therefore he deferred coming to them, that he might try them, that their trial might at last *be found to praise and honour.* (2.) He *loved them*, that is, he designed to do something great and extraordinary for them, to work such a miracle for their relief as he had not wrought for any of his friends; and therefore he delayed coming to them, that Lazarus might be *dead* and *buried* before he came. If Christ had come presently, and cured the sickness of Lazarus, he had done no more than he did for *many;* if he had raised him to life when newly dead, no more than he had done for *some:* but, deferring his relief so long, he had an opportunity of doing more for him than for *any.* Note, God hath gracious intentions even in seeming delays, Isa. liv. 7, 8; xlix. 14, &c. Christ's friends at Bethany were

not out of his thoughts, though, when he heard of their distress, he made no haste to them. When the work of deliverance, temporal or spiritual, public or personal, stands at a stay, it does but stay the time, and *every thing is beautiful in its season.*

IV. The discourse he had with his disciples when he was about to visit his friends at Bethany, *v.* 7—16. The conference is so very free and familiar as to make out what Christ saith, *I have called you friends.* Two things he discourses about—his own *danger* and Lazarus's *death.*

1. His own danger in going into Judea, *v.* 7—10.

(1.) Here is the notice which Christ gave his disciples of his purpose to go into Judea towards Jerusalem. His disciples were the men of his counsel, and to them he saith (*v.* 7), "*Let us go into Judea again,* though those of Judea are unworthy of such a favour." Thus Christ repeats the tenders of his mercy to those who have often rejected them. Now this may be considered, [1.] As a purpose of his kindness to his friends at Bethany, whose affliction, and all the aggravating circumstances of it, he knew very well, though no more expresses were sent to him; for he was present in spirit, though absent in body. When he knew they were brought to the last extremity, when the brother and sisters had given and taken a final farewell, "Now," saith he, "let us go to Judea." Christ will arise in favour of his people when *the time to favour them, yea, the set time, is come;* and the worst time is commonly the set time—when *our hope is lost, and we are cut off for our parts;* then they shall *know that I am the Lord* when *I have opened the graves,* Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 13. In the depths of affliction, let this therefore keep us out of the depths of despair, that man's extremity is God's opportunity, *Jehovah-jireh.* Or, [2.] As a trial of the courage of the disciples, whether they would venture to follow him thither, where they had so lately been frightened by an attempt upon their Master's life, which they looked upon as an attempt upon theirs too. To go to Judea, which was so lately made *too hot* for them, was a saying that *proved them.* But Christ did not say, "*Go you into Judea,* and I will stay and take shelter here;" no, *Let us go.* Note, Christ never brings his people into any peril but he accompanies them in it, and is with them even when they *walk through the valley of the shadow of death.*

(2.) Their objection against this journey (*v.* 8): *Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?* Here, [1.] They remind him of the danger he had been in there not long since. Christ's disciples are apt to make a greater matter of sufferings than their Master does, and to remember injuries longer. He had put up with the affront, it was over and gone, and forgotten, but his disciples could not forget it; *of late, νυν—now,* as if it were this very day, they *sought to stone thee.* Though it was at least two months ago, the remembrance of the fright was fresh in their minds. [2.] They marvel that he will *go thither again.* "Wilt thou favour those with thy presence that have expelled thee out of their coasts?" Christ's ways in passing by offences are *above our ways.* "Wilt thou expose thyself among a people that are so desperately enraged against thee? *Goest thou thither again,* where thou hast been so ill used?" Here they showed great care for their Master's safety, as Peter did, when he said, *Master, spare thyself;* had Christ been inclined to shift off suffering, he did not want friends to persuade him to it, but he had *opened his mouth to the Lord,* and he would not, he could not, go back. Yet, while the disciples show a concern for his safety, they discover at the same time, *First,* A distrust of his power; as if he could not secure both himself and them now in Judea as well as he had done formerly. Is his arm shortened? When we are solicitous for the interests of Christ's church and kingdom in the world, we must yet rest satisfied in the wisdom and power of the Lord Jesus, who knows how to secure a flock of sheep in the midst of a herd of wolves. *Secondly,* A secret fear of suffering themselves; for they count upon this if he suffer. When our own private interests happen to run in the same channel with those of the public, we are apt to think ourselves zealous for the Lord of hosts, when really we are only zealous for our own wealth, credit, ease, and safety, and *seek our own things,* under colour of seeking the things of Christ; we have therefore need nicely to distinguish upon our principles.

(3.) Christ's answer to this objection (*v.* 9, 10): *Are there not twelve hours in the day?* The Jews divided every day into twelve hours, and made their hours longer or shorter according as the days were, so that an hour with them was the twelfth part of the time between sun and sun; so some. Or, lying much more south than we, their days were nearer twelve hours long than ours. The divine Providence has given us day-light to work by, and lengthens it out to a competent time; and, reckoning the year round, *every country* has just as much *daylight* as *night,* and so much more as the *twilights* amount to. Man's life is a *day;* this day is divided into divers ages, states, and opportunities, as into hours shorter or longer, as God has appointed; the consideration of this should make us not only *very busy,* as to the *work* of life (if there were *twelve hours in the day,* each of them ought to be filled up with duty, and none of *them* trifled away), but also *very easy* as to the perils of life; our day shall be lengthened out till our work be done, and our testimony finished. This Christ applies to his case, and shows why he must go to Judea, because he had a *clear call* to go

For the opening of this, [1.] He shows the comfort and satisfaction which a man has in his own mind while he keeps in the way of his duty, as it is in general prescribed by the word of God, and particularly determined by the providence of God: *If any man walk in the day, he stumbles not;* that is, If a man keep close to his duty, and mind that, and set the will of God before him as his rule, with an impartial respect to all God's commandments, he does not *hesitate* in his own mind, but, *walking uprightly, walks surely*, and with a holy confidence. As he that walks in the day stumbles not, but goes on steadily and cheerfully in his way, *because he sees the light of this world*, and by it sees his way before him; so a good man, without any collateral security or sinister aims, relies upon the word of God as his rule, and regards the glory of God as his end, *because he sees* those two great lights, and keeps his eye upon them; thus he is furnished with a faithful guide in all his doubts, and a powerful guard in all his dangers, Gal. vi. 4; Ps. cxix. 6. Christ, wherever he went, walked *in the day*, and so shall we, if we follow his steps. [2.] He shows the pain and peril a man is in who walks not according to this rule (*v.* 10): *If a man walk in the night, he stumbles;* that is, If a man walk in the way of his heart, and the sight of his eyes, and according to the course of this world,—if he consult his own carnal reasonings more than the will and glory of God,—he falls into temptations and snares, is liable to great uneasiness and frightful apprehensions, trembles at the *shaking of a leaf*, and *flees* when none *pursues;* while an upright man *laughs at the shaking of the spear*, and stands undaunted when ten thousand invade. See Isa. xxxiii. 14—16. He stumbles, *because there is no light in him*, for light in us is that to our moral actions which light about us is to our natural actions. He has not a good principle within; he is not sincere; his eye is evil. Thus Christ not only justifies his purpose of going into Judea, but encourages his disciples to go along with him, and fear no evil.

2. The death of Lazarus is here discoursed of between Christ and his disciples, *v.* 11—16, where we have,

(1.) The notice Christ gave his disciples of the death of Lazarus, and an intimation that his business into Judea was to look after him, *v.* 11. After he had prepared his disciples for this dangerous march into an enemy's country, he then gives them,

[1.] Plain intelligence of the death of Lazarus, though he had received no advice of it: *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.* See here how Christ calls a believer and a believer's death

First, He calls a believer his friend: *Our friend Lazarus.* Note, 1. There is a covenant of friendship between Christ and believers, and a friendly affection and communion pursuant to it, which our Lord Jesus will own and not be ashamed of. *His secret is with the righteous.* 2. Those whom Christ is pleased to own as his friends all his disciples should take for *theirs.* Christ speaks of Lazarus as their common friend: *Our friend.* 3. Death itself does not break the bond of friendship between Christ and a believer. Lazarus is dead, and yet he is still *our friend.*

Secondly, He calls the death of a believer a *sleep: he sleepeth.* It is good to call death by such names and titles as will help to make it more *familiar* and less *formidable* to us. The death of Lazarus was in a peculiar sense a sleep, as that of Jairus's daughter, because he was to be raised again speedily; and, since we are sure to *rise again at last*, why should that make any great difference? And why should not the believing hope of that resurrection to eternal life make it as easy to us to put off the body and die as it is to put off our clothes and go to sleep? A good Christian, when he dies, does but sleep: he rests from the labours of the day past, and is refreshing himself for the next morning. Nay, herein death has the advantage of sleep, that sleep is only the *parenthesis*, but death is the *period*, of our cares and toils. The soul does not sleep, but becomes more active; but the body sleeps without any toss, without any terror; not distempered nor disturbed. The grave to the wicked is a prison, and its grave-clothes as the shackles of a criminal reserved for execution; but to the godly it is a bed, and all its bands as the soft and downy fetters of an easy quiet sleep. Though the body *corrupt*, it will rise in the morning as if it had never seen corruption; it is but putting off our clothes to be mended and trimmed up for the marriage day, the coronation day, to which we must rise. See Isa. lvii. 2; 1 Thess. iv. 14. The Greeks called their burying-places *dormitories*—κοιμητήρια.

[2.] Particular intimations of his favourable intentions concerning Lazarus: *but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.* He could have done it, and yet have staid where he was: he that restored at a distance one that was *dying* (*ch.* iv. 50) could have raised at a distance one that was *dead;* but he would put this honour upon the miracle, to work it by the grave side: *I go, to awake him.* As sleep is a resemblance of death, so a man's awaking out of sleep when he is called, especially when he is called by his own name, is an emblem of the resurrection (Job xiv. 15): *Then shalt thou call.* Christ had no sooner said, *Our friend sleeps*, but presently he adds, *I go, that I may awake him.* When Christ tells his people at any time how bad the case is he lets them know in the same breath how easily, how quickly, he can mend it. Christ's telling his disciples that this was his business to Judea might help to take off their fear of going

with him thither; he did not go upon a public errand to the temple, but a private visit, which would not so much expose him and them; and, besides, it was to do a kindness to a family to which they were all obliged.

(2.) Their mistake of the meaning of this notice, and the blunder they made about it (*v.* 12, 13): They said, *Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.* This intimates, [1.] *Some concern* they had for their friend Lazarus; they hoped he would recover; σωθήσεται—*he shall be saved* from dying at this time. Probably they had understood, by the messenger who brought news of his illness, that one of the most threatening symptoms he was under was that he was restless, and could get no sleep; and now that they heard he slept they concluded the fever was going off, and the worst was past. Sleep is often nature's physic, and reviving to its weak and weary powers. This is true of the sleep of death; if a good Christian so *sleep*, he shall do well, better than he did here. [2.] A *greater concern* for themselves; for hereby they insinuate that it was now needless for Christ to go to him, and expose himself and them. "If he sleep, he will be quickly well, and we may stay where we are." Thus we are willing to hope that the good work which we are called to do will do itself, or will be done by some other hand, if there be peril in the doing of it.

(3.) This mistake of theirs rectified (*v.* 13): *Jesus spoke of his death.* See here, [1.] How dull of understanding Christ's disciples as yet were. Let us not therefore condemn all those as heretics who mistake the sense of some of Christ's sayings. It is not good to aggravate our brethren's mistakes; yet this was a *gross* one, for it had easily been prevented if they had remembered how frequently death is called a sleep in the Old Testament. They should have understood Christ when he spoke scripture language. Besides, it would sound oddly for their Master to undertake a journey of two or three days only to awake a friend out of a natural sleep, which any one else might do. What Christ undertakes to do, we may be sure, is something great and uncommon, and a work *worthy of himself.* [2.] How carefully the evangelist corrects this error: *Jesus spoke of his death.* Those that speak in an unknown tongue, or use similitudes, should learn hence to *explain themselves,* and pray that they may interpret, to prevent mistakes.

(4.) The plain and express declaration which Jesus made to them of the death of Lazarus, and his resolution to go to Bethany, *v.* 14, 15. [1.] He gives them notice of the death of Lazarus; what he had before said darkly he now says plainly, and without a figure: *Lazarus is dead, v.* 14. Christ takes cognizance of the death of his saints, for it is precious in his sight (Ps. cxvi. 15), and he is not pleased if we do not consider it, and lay it to heart. See what a compassionate teacher Christ is, and how he condescends to those that are out of the way, and by his subsequent sayings and doings explains the difficulties of what went before. [2.] He gives them the reason why he had delayed so long to go and see him: *I am glad for your sakes that I was not there.* If he had been there time enough, he would have healed his disease and prevented his death, which would have been much for the comfort of Lazarus's friends; but then his disciples would have seen no further proof of his power than what they had often seen, and, consequently, their faith had received no improvement; but now that he went and raised him from the dead, as there were many brought to *believe on him* who before did not (*v.* 45), so there was much done towards the perfecting of what was lacking in the faith of those that did, which Christ aimed at: *To the intent that you may believe.* [3.] He resolves now to go to Bethany, and take his disciples along with him: *Let us go unto him.* Not, "Let us go to his sisters, to comfort them" (which is the utmost we can do), but, Let us go *to him;* for Christ can *show wonders to the dead.* Death, which will separate us from all our other friends, and cut us off from correspondence with them, cannot separate us from the love of Christ, nor put us out of the reach of his calls; as he will maintain his *covenant with the dust,* so he can make visits to the dust. *Lazarus is dead,* but *let us go to him;* though perhaps those who said, If he sleep there is *no need* to go, were ready to say, If he be dead it is to *no purpose* to go.

(5.) Thomas exciting his fellow-disciples cheerfully to attend their Master's motions (*v.* 16): *Thomas, who is called Didymus.* Thomas in Hebrew and Didymus in Greek signify a *twin;* it is said of Rebekah (Gen. xxv. 24) that there were *twins in her womb;* the word is *Thomim.* Probably Thomas was a *twin.* He said *to his fellow-disciples* (who probably looked with fear and concern upon one another when Christ had said so positively, *Let us go to him),* very courageously, *Let us also go that we may die with him; with him,* that is,

[1.] With Lazarus, who was now dead; so some take it. Lazarus was a dear and loving friend both to Christ and his disciples, and perhaps Thomas had a particular intimacy with him. Now if he be dead, saith he, *let us* even *go and die with him.* For, *First,* "If we *survive,* we know not how to *live without him.*" Probably Lazarus had done them many good offices, sheltered them, and provided for them, and been to them *instead of eyes;* and now that he was gone they had *no man like-minded,* and "Therefore," saith he, "we had as good die with him." Thus we are sometimes ready to think our lives bound up in the lives of some that were dear to us: but God will teach us to live, and to live comfortably, u on himself, when those are gone without whom we

thought we could not live. But this is not all. *Secondly,* "If we die, we hope to be *happy with him.*" Such a firm belief he has of a happiness on the other side death, and such good hope through grace of their own and Lazarus's interest in it, that he is willing they should all go and *die with him.* It is better to die, and go along with our Christian friends to that world which is enriched by their removal to it, than stay behind in a world that is impoverished by their departure out of it. The more of our friends are translated hence, the fewer cords we have to bind us to this earth, and the more to draw our hearts heavenwards. How pleasantly does the good man speak of dying, as if it were but undressing and going to bed!

[2.] "Let us go and die *with our Master,* who is now exposing himself to death by venturing into Judea;" and so I rather think it is meant. "If he will go into danger, let us also go and take our lot with him, according to the command we received, *Follow me.*" Thomas knew so much of the malice of the Jews against Christ, and the counsels of God concerning him, which he had often told them of, that it was no foreign supposition that he was now going to die. And now Thomas manifests, *First,* A gracious readiness to die with Christ himself, flowing from strong affections to him, though his faith was weak, as appeared afterwards, *ch.* xiv. 5; xx. 25. *Where thou diest I will die,* Ruth i. 17. *Secondly,* A zealous desire to help his fellow-disciples into the same frame: "*Let us go,* one and all, and *die with him;* if they stone him, let them stone us; who would desire to survive such a Master?" Thus, in difficult times, Christians should animate one another. We may each of us say, *Let us die with him.* Note, The consideration of the dying of the Lord Jesus should make us willing to die whenever God calls for us.

17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already. 18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: 19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house. 21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee. 23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. 24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. 25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? 27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. 28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. 29 As soon as she heard *that,* she arose quickly, and came unto him. 30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. 32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

The matter being determined, that Christ will go to Judea, and his disciples with him, they address themselves to their journey; in this journey some circumstances happened which the other evangelists record, as the healing of the blind man at Jericho, and the conversion of Zaccheus. We must not reckon ourselves out of our way, while we are in the way of doing good; nor be so intent upon one good office as to neglect another.

At length, he comes near to Bethany, which is said to be about *fifteen furlongs* from Jerusalem, about two measured miles, *v.* 18. Notice is taken of this, that this miracle was in effect wrought *in Jerusalem,* and so was put to her score. Christ's miracles in Galilee were more *numerous,* but those in or near Jerusalem were more *illustrious;* there he healed one that had been diseased *thirty-eight years,* another that had been blind *from his birth,* and raised one that had been dead *four days.* To Bethany Christ came, and observe,

I. What posture he found his friends there in. When he had been last with them it is probable that he left them well, in health and joy; but when we part from our friends (though Christ knew) we know not what changes may affect us or them before we meet again.

1. He found his friend Lazarus *in the*

grave, *v.* 17. When he came near the town, probably by the burying-place belonging to the town, he was told by the neighbours, or some persons whom he met, that Lazarus had been *four days buried.* Some think that Lazarus died the same day that the messenger came to Jesus with the tidings of his sickness, and so reckon two days for his abode in the same place and two days for his journey. I rather think that Lazarus died at the very instant that Jesus said, "*Our friend sleepeth,* he is now newly fallen asleep;" and that the time between his death and burial (which among the Jews was but short), with the four days of his lying in the grave, was taken up in this journey; for Christ travelled publicly, as appears by his passing through Jericho, and his abode at Zaccheus's house took up some time. Promised salvations, though they always come surely, yet often come slowly.

2. He found his friends that survived *in grief.* Martha and Mary were almost swallowed up with sorrow for the death of their brother, which is intimated where it is said that *many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them.* Note, (1.) Ordinarily, where death is there are *mourners,* especially when those that were agreeable and amiable to their relations, and serviceable to their generation, are taken away. The house where death is is called *the house of mourning,* Eccl. vii. 2. When man goes to his long home the *mourners go about the streets* (Eccl. xii. 5), or rather sit alone, and *keep silence.* Here was Martha's house, a house where the fear of God was, and on which his blessing rested, yet made a *house of mourning.* Grace will keep sorrow from the heart (*ch.* xiv. 1), not from the house. (2.) Where there are mourners there ought to be comforters. It is a duty we owe to those that are in sorrow to mourn with them, and to comfort them; and our mourning with them will be some comfort to them. When we are under the present impressions of grief, we are apt to forget those things which would minister comfort to us, and therefore have need of remembrancers. It is a mercy to have remembrancers when we are in sorrow, and our duty to be remembrancers to those who are in sorrow. The Jewish doctors laid great stress upon this, obliging their disciples to make conscience of comforting the mourners after the burial of the dead. They comforted them *concerning their brother,* that is, by speaking to them of him, not only of the good name he left behind, but of the happy state he was gone to. When godly relations and friends are taken from us, whatever occasion we have to be afflicted concerning ourselves, who are left behind and miss them, we have reason to be comforted concerning those who are gone before us to a happiness where they have no need of us. This visit which the Jews made to Martha and Mary is an evidence that they were persons of distinction, and made a figure; as also that they behaved obligingly to all; so that though they were followers of Christ, yet those who had no respect for him were civil to them. There was also a providence in it, that so many Jews, Jewish ladies it is probable, should come together, just at this time, to comfort the mourners, that they might be unexceptionable witnesses of the miracle, and see what miserable comforters they were, in comparison with Christ. Christ did not usually send for witnesses to his miracles, and yet had none been by but relations this would have been excepted against; therefore God's counsel so ordered it that these should come together accidentally, to bear their testimony to it, that infidelity might stop her mouth.

II. What passed between him and his surviving friends at this interview. When Christ defers his visits for a time they are thereby made the more acceptable, much the more welcome; so it was here. His departures endear his returns, and his absence teaches us how to value his presence. We have here,

1. The interview between Christ and Martha.

(1.) We are told that she *went and met him,* *v.* 20. [1.] It should seem that Martha was earnestly expecting Christ's arrival, and enquiring for it. Either she had sent out messengers, to bring her tidings of his first approach, or she had often asked, *Saw you him whom my soul loveth?* so that the first who discovered him ran to her with the welcome news. However it was, she heard of his coming before he arrived. She had waited long, and often asked, *Is he come?* and could hear no tidings of him; but long-looked-for came at last. *At the end the vision will speak, and not lie.* [2.] Martha, when the good news was brought that Jesus was coming, threw all aside, and *went and met him,* in token of a most affectionate welcome. She waived all ceremony and compliment to the Jews who came to visit her, and hastened to go and meet Jesus. Note, When God by his grace or providence is coming towards us in ways of mercy and comfort, we should go forth by faith, hope, and prayer to meet him. Some suggest that Martha went out of the town to meet Jesus, to let him know that there were several Jews in the house, who were no friends to him, that if he pleased he might keep out of the way of them. [3.] When Martha went to meet Jesus, Mary *sat still in the house.* Some think she did *not* hear the tidings, being in her drawing-room, receiving visits of condolence, while Martha who was busied in the household-affairs had early notice of it. Perhaps Martha would not tell her sister that Christ was coming, being ambitious of the honour of receiving him first. *Sancta est prudentia clam fratribus clam parentibus ad Christum esse conferre —Holy prudence conducts us to Christ, while brethren and parents know not what we are*

doing.—Maldonat. in locum. Others think she *did* hear that Christ was come, but was so overwhelmed with sorrow that she did not care to stir, choosing rather to indulge her sorrow, and to sit poring upon her affliction, and saying, *I do well to* mourn. Comparing this story with that in Luke x. 38, &c., we may observe the different tempers of these two sisters, and the temptations and advantages of each. Martha's natural temper was active and busy; she loved to be here and there, and at the end of every thing; and this had been a snare to her when by it she was not only careful and cumbered about many things, but hindered from the exercises of devotion: but now in a day of affliction this active temper did her a kindness, kept the grief from her heart, and made her forward to meet Christ, and so she received comfort from him the sooner. On the other hand, Mary's natural temper was contemplative and reserved. This had been formerly an advantage to her, when it placed her at Christ's feet, to hear his word, and enabled her there to attend upon him without those distractions with which Martha was cumbered; but now in the day of affliction that same temper proved a snare to her, made her less able to grapple with her grief, and disposed her to melancholy: *But Mary sat still in the house.* See here how much it will be our wisdom carefully to watch against the temptations, and improve the advantages, of our natural temper.

(2.) Here is fully related the discourse between Christ and Martha.

[1.] Martha's address to Christ, *v.* 21, 22. *First,* She complains of Christ's long absence and delay. She said it, not only with grief for the death of her brother, but with some resentment of the seeming unkindness of the Master: *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* Here is, 1. Some evidence of faith. She believed Christ's *power,* that, though her brother's sickness was very grievous, yet he could have cured it, and so have prevented his death. She believed his *pity,* that if he had but seen Lazarus in his extreme illness, and his dear relations all in tears about him, he would have had compassion, and have prevented so sad a breach, for his compassions fail not. But, 2. Here are sad instances of unbelief. Her faith was true, but weak as a bruised reed, for she limits the power of Christ, in saying, *If thou hadst been here;* whereas she ought to have known that Christ could cure at a distance, and that his gracious operations were not limited to his bodily presence. She reflects likewise upon the wisdom and kindness of Christ, that he did not hasten to them when they sent for him, as if he had not *timed his business* well, and now might as well have staid away, and not have come at all, as to come too late; and, as for any help now, she can scarcely entertain the thought of it.

Secondly, Yet she corrects and comforts herself with the thoughts of the prevailing interest Christ had in heaven; at least, she blames herself for blaming her Master, and for suggesting that he comes too late: *for I know that even now,* desperate as the case is, *whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it to thee.* Observe, 1. How *willing* her hope was. Though she had not courage to ask of Jesus that he should raise him to life again, there having been no precedent as yet of any one raised to life that had been so long dead, yet, like a modest petitioner, she humbly recommends the case to the wise and compassionate consideration of the Lord Jesus. When we know not what in particular to ask or expect, let us in general refer ourselves to God, let him do as seemeth him good. *Judicii tui est, non præsumptionis meæ —I leave it to thy judgment, not to my presumption.*—Aug. in locum. When we know not what to pray for, it is our comfort that the great Intercessor knows what to ask for us, and is always heard. 2. How *weak* her faith was. She should have said, "Lord, thou canst do whatsoever thou wilt;" but she only says, "Thou canst obtain whatsoever thou prayest for." She had forgotten that the Son has *life in himself,* that he wrought miracles by his own power. Yet both these considerations must be taken in for the encouragement of our faith and hope, and neither excluded: the dominion Christ has on earth and his interest and intercession in heaven. He has in the one hand the golden sceptre, and in the other the golden censer; his power is always predominant, his intercession always prevalent.

[2.] The comfortable word which Christ gave to Martha, in answer to her pathetic address (*v.* 23): *Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.* Martha, in her complaint, looked back, reflecting with regret *that Christ was not there,* for then, thinks she, my brother had been now alive. We are apt, in such cases, to add to our own trouble, by fancying what *might have been.* "If such a method had been taken, such a physician employed, my friend had not died;" which is more than we know: but what good does this do? When God's will is done, our business is to submit to him. Christ directs Martha, and us in her, to look forward, and to think what *shall be,* for that is a certainty, and yields sure comfort: *Thy brother shall rise again. First,* This was true of Lazarus in a sense peculiar to him: he was now presently to be raised; but Christ speaks of it in general as a thing to be done, not which he himself would do, so humbly did our Lord Jesus speak of what he did. He also expresses it *ambiguously,* leaving her uncertain at first whether he would raise him presently or not till the last day, that he might try her faith and patience. *Secondly,* It is applicable to all the saints, and their resurrection at the last day. Note, It is matter of comfort to us,

when we have buried our godly friends and relations, to think that they shall *rise again.* As the soul at death is not lost, but gone before, so the body is not lost, but laid up. Think you hear Christ saying, "Thy parent, thy child, thy yoke-fellow, shall rise again; *these dry bones shall live.*"

[3.] The faith which Martha mixed with this word, and the unbelief mixed with this faith, *v.* 24.

First, She accounts it a *faithful saying* that *he shall rise again at the last day.* Though the doctrine of the resurrection was to have its full proof from Christ's resurrection, yet, as it was already revealed, she firmly believed it, Acts xxiv. 15. 1. That there shall be a *last day,* with which all the days of time shall be numbered and finished. 2. That there shall be a *general* resurrection at that day, when the earth and sea shall give up their dead. 3. That there shall be a *particular* resurrection of each one: "I know that I shall rise again, and this and the other relation that was dear to me." As bone shall return to his bone in that day, so friend to his friend.

Secondly, Yet she seems to think this saying not so well worthy of all acceptation as really it was: "*I know he shall rise again at the last day;* but what are we the better for that now?" As if the comforts of the resurrection to eternal life were not worth speaking of, or yielded not satisfaction sufficient to balance her affliction. See our weakness and folly, that we suffer present sensible things to make a deeper impression upon us, both of grief and joy, than those things which are the objects of faith. *I know that he shall rise again at the last day;* and is not this enough? She seems to think it is not. Thus, by our discontent under present crosses, we greatly undervalue our future hopes, and put a slight upon them, as if not worth regarding.

[4.] The further instruction and encouragement which Jesus Christ gave her; for he will not quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised reed. He said to her, *I am the resurrection and the life, v.* 25, 26. Two things Christ possesses her with the belief of, in reference to the present distress; and they are the things which our faith should fasten upon in the like cases.

First, The power of Christ, his sovereign power: *I am the resurrection and the life,* the fountain of life, and the head and author of the resurrection. Martha believed that at his prayer God would give any thing, but he would have her know that by his word he could work any thing. Martha believed a resurrection at the *last day;* Christ tells her that he had that power lodged in his own hand, that the dead were to *hear his voice* (*ch.* v. 25), whence it was easy to infer, He that could raise a world of men that had been dead many ages could doubtless raise one man that had been dead but *four days.* Note, It is an unspeakable comfort to all good Christians that Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life, and will be so to them. *Resurrection* is a return to life; Christ is the author of that return, and of that life to which it is a return. We look for the *resurrection of the dead* and the *life of the world to come,* and Christ is both; the author and principle of both, and the ground of our hope of both.

Secondly, The promises of the new covenant, which give us further ground of hope that *we shall live.* Observe,

a. To whom these promises are made—to those that believe in Jesus Christ, to those that consent to, and confide in, Jesus Christ as the only Mediator of reconciliation and communion between God and man, that receive the record God has given in his word concerning his Son, sincerely comply with it, and answer all the great intentions of it. The condition of the latter promise is thus expressed: *Whosoever liveth and believeth in me,* which may be understood, either, (*a.*) Of *natural* life: *Whosoever lives in this world,* whether he be Jew or Gentile, wherever he lives, if he believe in Christ, he shall live by him. Yet it limits the time: Whoever during *life,* while he is here in this state of probation, *believes in me,* shall be happy in me, but after death it will be too late. Whoever *lives* and *believes,* that is, lives by faith (Gal. ii. 20), has a faith that influences his conversation. Or, (*b.*) Of *spiritual* life: He that *lives* and *believes* is he that by faith is born again to a heavenly and divine life, to whom *to live is Christ*—that makes Christ the life of his soul.

b. What the promises are (*v.* 25): *Though he die, yet shall he live,* nay, *he shall never die, v.* 26. Man consists of body and soul, and provision is made for the happiness of both.

(*a.*) For the *body;* here is the promise of a *blessed resurrection.* Though the body be dead because of sin (there is no remedy but it will die), yet it *shall live again.* All the difficulties that attend the state of the dead are here overlooked, and made nothing of. Though the sentence of death was just, though the effects of death be dismal, though the bands of death be strong, though he be dead and buried, dead and putrefied, though the scattered dust be so mixed with common dust that no art of man can distinguish, much less separate them, put the case as strongly as you will on that side, yet we are sure that *he shall live* again: the body shall be raised a glorious body.

(*b.*) For the *soul;* here is the promise of a *blessed immortality.* He that *liveth and believeth,* who, being united to Christ by faith, lives spiritually by virtue of that union, he shall *never die.* That spiritual life shall never be extinguished, but perfected in eternal life. As the soul, being in its nature spiritual, is therefore immortal; so if by faith it live a spiritual life, consonant to its nature, its felicity shall be immortal too. It *shall never*

die, shall never be otherwise than easy and happy, and there is not any intermission or interruption of its life, as there is of the life of the body. The *mortality* of the body shall at length be *swallowed up of life;* but the life of the soul, the believing soul, shall be immediately at death swallowed up of immortality. *He shall not die, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, for ever—Non morietur in æternum;* so Cyprian quotes it. The body shall not be *for ever* dead in the grave; it dies (like the two witnesses) but for a *time, times, and the dividing of time;* and when time shall be no more, and all the divisions of it shall be numbered and finished, a *spirit of life from God shall enter into it.* But this is not all; the soul shall not die that death which is *for ever,* shall *not die eternally. Blessed and holy,* that is, blessed and happy, is he that by faith *has part in the first resurrection,* has part in Christ, who is that resurrection; for on such the *second death,* which is a death for ever, *shall have no power;* see *ch.* vi. 40. Christ asks her, "*Believest thou this?* Canst thou *assent* to it with application? Canst thou take my word for it?" Note, When we have read or heard the word of Christ, concerning the great things of the other world, we should seriously put it to ourselves, "*Do we believe this, this* truth in particular, *this* which is attended with so many difficulties, *this* which is suited to my case? Does my belief of it realize it to me, and give my soul an assurance of it, so that I can say, not only *this* I believe, but *thus* I believe it?" Martha was doting upon her brother's being raised to life in this world; before Christ gave her hopes of this, he directed her thoughts to another life, another world: "No matter for *that,* but *believest thou this* that I tell thee concerning the *future* state?" The crosses and comforts of this present time would not make such an impression upon us as they do if we did but believe the things of eternity as we ought.

[5.] Martha's unfeigned assent yielded to what Christ said, *v.* 27. We have here Martha's creed, the good confession she witnessed, the same with that for which Peter was commended (Matt. xvi. 16, 17), and it is the *conclusion of the whole matter.*

First, Here is the *guide of her faith,* and that is the word of Christ; without any alteration, exception, or proviso, she takes it entire as Christ had said it: *Yea, Lord,* whereby she subscribes to the truth of all and every part of that which Christ had promised, in his own sense: *Even so.* Faith is an echo to divine revelation, returns the same words, and resolves to abide by them: *Yea, Lord, As the word did make it so I believe and take it,* said queen Elizabeth.

Secondly, The *ground of her faith,* and that is the authority of Christ; she believes *this* because she believes that he who saith it is Christ. She has recourse to the foundation for the support of the superstructure. *I believe, πεπίστευκα,* "*I have believed* that thou art Christ, and therefore *I do believe* this." Observe here,

a. What she believed and confessed concerning Jesus; three things, all to the same effect:—(*a.*) That he was the Christ, or Messiah, promised and expected under this name and notion, the *anointed one.* (*b.*) That he was the *Son of God;* so the Messiah was called (Ps. ii. 7), not by office only, but by nature. (*c.*) That it was *he who should come* into the world, the ὁ ἐρχόμενος. That blessing of blessings which the church had for so many ages waited for as *future,* she embraced as *present.*

b. What she inferred hence, and what she alleged this for. If she admits this, that Jesus is the Christ, there is no difficulty in believing that he is the resurrection and the life; for if he be the Christ, then, (*a.*) He is the fountain of light and truth, and we may take all his sayings for faithful and divine, upon his own word. If he be the Christ, he is that prophet whom we are to hear *in all things.* (*b.*) He is the fountain of life and blessedness, and we may therefore depend upon his ability as well as upon his veracity. How shall bodies, turned to dust, *live again?* How shall souls, clogged and clouded as ours are, *live for ever?* We could not believe this, but that we believe him that undertakes it to be *the Son of God,* who has life *in himself,* and has it for us.

2. The interview between Christ and Mary the other sister. And here observe,

(1.) The notice which Martha gave her of Christ's coming (*v.* 28): *When she had so said,* as one that needed to say no more, *she went her way,* easy in her mind, and *called Mary her sister.* [1.] Martha, having received instruction and comfort from Christ herself, called her sister to share with her. Time was when Martha would have drawn Mary from Christ, to come and help her in *much serving* (Luke x. 40); but, to make her amends for this, here she is industrious to draw her to Christ. [2.] She called her *secretly,* and whispered it in her ear, because there was company by, Jews, who were no friends to Christ. The saints are called *into the fellowship of Jesus Christ* by an invitation that is secret and distinguishing, given to them and not to others; they have meat to eat that the world knows not of, joy that a stranger does not intermeddle with. [3.] She called her by order from Christ; he bade her *go call her sister.* The call that is *effectual,* whoever brings it, is sent by Christ. *The Master is come, and calleth for thee. First,* She calls Christ *the Master,* διδάσκαλος, a *teaching master;* by that title he was commonly called and known among them. Mr. George Herbert took pleasure in calling Christ, *my Master. Secondly,* She triumphs in his arrival: *The Master is come.* He whom we have long wished and waited for, *he is come, he is come;* this was the best cordial in the present distress. "Lazarus

gone, and our comfort in him is gone; but the *Master is come*, who is better than the dearest friend, and has that in him which will abundantly make up all our losses. He is come who is our *teacher*, who will teach us how to get good by our sorrow (Ps. xciv. 12), who will *teach*, and so comfort." *Thirdly*, She invites her sister to go and meet him: "*He calls for thee*, enquires what is become of thee, and would have thee sent for." Note, When Christ our Master comes, he *calls for us*. He comes in his word and ordinances, calls us to them, calls us by them, calls us to himself. He calls for thee in particular, for thee *by name* (Ps. xxvii. 8); and, if he call thee, he will cure thee, he will comfort thee.

(2.) The haste which Mary made to Christ upon this notice given her (*v.* 29): *As soon as she heard* this good news, that the *Master was come*, she *arose quickly*, and came to him. She little thought how near he was to her, for he is often nearer to them that mourn in Zion than they are aware of; but, when she knew how near he was, she started up, and in a transport of joy ran to meet him. The least intimation of Christ's gracious approaches is enough to a lively faith, which stands ready to take the hint, and answer the first call. When Christ was come, [1.] She did not consult the decorum of her mourning, but, forgetting ceremony, and the common usage in such cases, she ran through the town, to meet Christ. Let no nice punctilios of decency and honour deprive us at any time of opportunities of conversing with Christ. [2.] She did not consult her neighbours, the Jews that were *with her, comforting her;* she left them all, to come to him, and did not only not ask their advice, but not so much as ask their leave, or beg their pardon for her rudeness.

(3.) We are told (*v.* 30) where she found the Master; he was not yet come into Bethany, but was at the town's end, *in that place where Martha met him.* See here, [1.] Christ's love to his work. He staid near the place where the grave was, that he might be ready to go to it. He would not go into the town, to *refresh himself* after the fatigue of his journey, till he had done the work he came to do; nor would he go into the town, lest it should look like ostentation, and a design to levy a crowd to be spectators of the miracle. [2.] Mary's love to Christ; still she *loved much.* Though Christ had seemed unkind in his delays, yet she could take nothing amiss from him. Let us go thus to Christ *without the camp*, Heb. xiii. 13.

(4.) The misconstruction which the Jews that were with Mary made of her going away so hastily (*v.* 31): They said, *She goes to the grave, to weep there.* Martha bore up better under this affliction than Mary did, who was a woman of a tender and sorrowful spirit; such was her natural temper. Those that are so have need to watch against melancholy, and ought to be pitied and helped. These comforters found that their formalities did her no service, but that she hardened herself in sorrow: and therefore concluded when she went out, and turned that way, it was to go *to the grave* and *weep there.* See, [1.] What often is the folly and fault of mourners; they contrive how to aggravate their own grief, and to make bad worse. We are apt in such cases to take a strange pleasure in our own pain, and to say, *We do well* to be passionate in our grief, even unto death; we are apt to fasten upon those things that aggravate the affliction, and what good does this do us, when it is our duty to reconcile ourselves to the will of God in it? Why should mourners go to the grave to weep there, when they sorrow not as those that have no hope? Affliction of itself is grievous; why should we make it more so? [2.] What is the wisdom and duty of comforters; and that is, to prevent as much as may be, in those who grieve inordinately, the revival of the sorrow, and to divert it. Those Jews that followed Mary were thereby led to Christ, and became the witnesses of one of his most glorious miracles. It is good cleaving to Christ's friends in their sorrows, for thereby we may come to know him better.

(5.) Mary's address to our Lord Jesus (*v.* 32): She came, attended with her train of comforters, and *fell down at his feet*, as one overwhelmed with a passionate sorrow, and said with many tears (as appears *v.* 33), *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*, as Martha said before, for they had often said it to one another. Now here, [1.] Her posture is very humble and submissive: *She fell down at his feet*, which was more than Martha did, who had a greater command of her passions. She fell down as a sinking mourner, but fell down at his feet as a humble petitioner. This Mary had sat *at Christ's feet to hear his word* (Luke x. 39), and here we find her there on another errand. Note, Those that in a day of peace place themselves at Christ's feet, to receive instructions from him, may with comfort and confidence in a day of trouble cast themselves at his feet with hope to find favour with him. She *fell at his feet*, as one submitting to his will in what was done, and referring herself to his good-will in what was now to be done. When we are in affliction we must cast ourselves at Christ's feet in a penitent sorrow and self-abasement for sin, and a patient resignation of ourselves to the divine disposal. Mary's casting herself at Christ's feet was in token of the profound respect and veneration she had for him. Thus subjects were wont to give honour to their kings and princes; but, our Lord Jesus not appearing in secular glory as an earthly prince, those who by this posture of adoration gave honour to him certainly looked upon him as more than man, and intended hereby to give him divine honour. Mary hereby made profession of the

Christian faith as truly as Martha did, and in effect said, *I believe that thou art the Christ; bowing the knee to* Christ, and *confessing him with the tongue,* are put together as equivalent, Rom. xiv. 11; Phil. ii.10, 11. This she did in presence of *the Jews* that attended her, who, though friends to her and her family, yet were bitter enemies to Christ; yet in their sight she fell at Christ's feet, as one that was neither ashamed to own the veneration she had for Christ nor afraid of disobliging her friends and neighbours by it. Let them resent it as they pleased, she falls at his feet; and, if this be to be vile, she will be yet more vile; see Cant. viii. 1. We serve a Master of whom we have no reason to be ashamed, and whose acceptance of our services is sufficient to balance the reproach of men and all their revilings. [2.] Her address is very pathetic: *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* Christ's delay was designed for the best, and proved so; yet both the sisters very indecently *cast the same in his teeth,* and in effect charge him with the death of their brother. This repeated challenge he might justly have resented, might have told them he had something else to do than to be at their beck and to attend them; he must come when his business would permit him: but not a word of this; he considered the circumstances of their affliction, and that losers think they may have leave to speak, and therefore overlooked the rudeness of this welcome, and gave us an example of mildness and meekness in such cases. Mary added no more, as Martha did; but it appears, by what follows, that what she fell short in words she made up in tears; she said less than Martha, but wept more; and tears of devout affection have a voice, a loud prevailing voice, in the ears of Christ; no rhetoric like this.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. 34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. 35 Jesus wept. 36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! 37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? 38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. 39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days. 40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? 41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said *it,* that they may believe that thou hast sent me. 43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Here we have, I. Christ's tender *sympathy* with his afflicted friends, and the share he took to himself in their sorrows, which appeared three ways:—

1. By the inward groans and troubles of his spirit (*v.* 33): *Jesus saw Mary weeping* for the loss of a loving brother, and the *Jews that came with her weeping* for the loss of a good neighbour and friend; when he saw what a *place of weepers,* a *bochim,* this was, *he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.* See here,

(1.) The griefs of the sons of men represented in the tears of Mary and her friends. What an emblem was here of this world, this vale of tears! Nature itself teaches us to weep over our dear relations, when they are removed by death; Providence thereby calls to *weeping and mourning.* It is probable that Lazarus's estate devolved upon his sisters, and was a considerable addition to their fortunes; and in such a case people say, now-a-days, though they cannot wish their relations dead (that is, they do not say they do), yet, if they were dead, they would not wish them alive again; but these sisters, whatever they got by their brother's death, heartily wished him alive again. Religion teaches us likewise to *weep with them that weep,* as these Jews wept with Mary, considering that we ourselves also *are in the body.* Those that truly love their friends will share with them in their joys and griefs; for what is friendship but a communication of affections? Job xvi. 5.

(2.) The grace of the Son of God and his compassion towards those that are in misery. *In all their afflictions he is afflicted,* Isa. lxiii. 9; Judg. x. 16. When Christ saw them all in tears,

[1.] He *groaned in the spirit.* He suffered himself to be tempted (as we are when we are disturbed by some great affliction), *yet without sin.* This was an expression, either,

First, Of his displeasure at the inordinate grief of those about him, as Mark v. 39: "*Why make ye this ado and weep?* What a hurry is here! does this become those that believe in a God, a heaven, and another world?" Or, *Secondly,* Of his feeling sense of the calamitous state of human life, and the power of death, to which fallen man is subject. Having now to make a vigorous attack upon death and the grave, he thus stirred up himself to the encounter, *put on the garments of vengeance,* and *his fury it upheld him;* and that he might the more resolutely undertake the redress of our grievances, and the cure of our griefs, he was pleased to make himself sensible of the weight of them, and under the burden of them he now *groaned in spirit.* Or, *Thirdly,* It was an expression of his kind sympathy with his friends that were in sorrow. Here was the sounding of the bowels, the mercies which the afflicted church so earnestly solicits, Is. lxiii. 15. Christ not only seemed concerned, but he *groaned in the spirit;* he was inwardly and sincerely affected with the case. David's pretended friends counterfeited sympathy, to disguise their enmity (Ps. xli. 6); but we must learn of Christ to have our love and sympathy *without dissimulation.* Christ's was a deep and hearty sigh.

[2.] He was *troubled.* He *troubled himself;* so the phrase is, very significantly. He had all the passions and affections of the human nature, for in all things he must *be like to his brethren;* but he had a perfect command of them, so that they were never *up,* but *when* and *as* they were called; he was never troubled, but when he *troubled himself,* as he saw cause. He often *composed* himself to trouble, but was never discomposed or disordered by it. He was voluntary both in his passion and in his compassion. He had power to lay down his grief, and power to take it again.

2. His concern for them appeared by his *kind enquiry* after the poor remains of his deceased friend (*v.* 34): Where *have you laid him?* He knew where he was laid, and yet asks, because, (1.) He would thus express himself as *a man,* even when he was going to exert the power of a God. Being found in fashion as a man, he accommodates himself to the way and manner of the sons of men: *Non nescit, sed quasi nescit—He is not ignorant, but he makes as if he were,* saith Austin here. (2.) He enquired where the grave was, lest, if he had gone straight to it of his own knowledge, the unbelieving Jews should have thence taken occasion to suspect a collusion between him and Lazarus, and a trick in the case. Many expositors observe this from Chrysostom. (3.) He would thus divert the grief of his mourning friends, by raising their expectations of something great; as if he had said, "I did not come hither with an address of condolence, to mingle a few fruitless insignificant tears with yours; no, I have other work to do; come, let us adjourn to the grave, and go about our business there." Note, A serious address to our work is the best remedy against inordinate grief. (4.) He would hereby intimate to us the special care he takes of the bodies of the saints while they lie in the grave; he takes notice *where they are laid,* and will look after them. There is not only a covenant with the dust, but a guard upon it.

3. It appeared by *his tears.* Those about him did not tell him where the body was buried, but desired him to *come and see,* and led him directly to the grave, that his eye might yet more affect his heart with the calamity.

(1.) As he was going to the grave, as if he had been following the corpse thither, *Jesus wept, v.* 35. A very short verse, but it affords many useful instructions. [1.] That Jesus Christ was really and truly man, and partook with the children, not only of flesh and blood, but of a human soul, susceptible of the impressions of joy, and grief, and other affections. Christ gave this proof of his humanity, in both senses of the word; that, as a man, he could weep, and, as a merciful man, he *would weep,* before he gave this proof of his divinity. [2.] That he was *a man of sorrows,* and *acquainted with grief,* as was foretold, Isa. liii. 3. We never read that he laughed, but more than once we have him in tears. Thus he shows not only that a mournful state will consist with the love of God, but that those who sow to the Spirit must sow in tears. [3.] Tears of compassion well become Christians, and make them most to resemble Christ. It is a relief to those who are in sorrow to have their friends sympathize with them, especially such a friend as their Lord Jesus.

(2.) Different constructions were put upon Christ's weeping. [1.] Some made a kind and candid interpretation of it, and what was very natural (*v.* 36): *Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!* They seem to wonder that he should have so strong an affection for one to whom he was not related, and with whom he had not had any long acquaintance, for Christ spent most of his time in Galilee, a great way from Bethany. It becomes us, according to this example of Christ, to show our love to our friends, both living and dying. We must sorrow for our brethren that sleep in Jesus as those that are full of love, though not void of hope; as the *devout men* that buried Stephen, Acts viii. 2. Though our tears profit not the dead, they embalm their memory. These tears were indications of his particular love to Lazarus, but he has given proofs no less evident of his love to all the saints, in that he died for them. When he only dropped a tear over Lazarus, they said, *See how he loved him!* Much more reason have we to say so, for whom he hath laid down his life: *See how he loved us! Greater love has no*

man than this [2.] Others made a peevish unfair reflection upon it, as if these tears bespoke his inability to help his friend (*v.* 37): *Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind,* have prevented the death of Lazarus? Here it is slily insinuated, *First,* That the death of Lazarus being (as it seemed by his tears) a great grief to him, if he could have prevented it he would, and therefore because he *did not* they incline to think that he *could not;* as, when he was dying, they concluded that he could not, because he did not, save himself, and *come down from the cross;* not considering that divine power is always directed in its operations by divine wisdom, not merely according to his will, but according to the counsel of his will, wherein it becomes us to acquiesce. If Christ's friends, whom he loves, die,—if his church, whom he loves, be persecuted and afflicted,—we must not impute it to any defect either in his power or love, but conclude that it is because he sees it for the best. *Secondly,* That therefore it might justly be questioned whether he did indeed *open the eyes of the blind,* that is, whether it was not a sham. His not working this miracle they thought enough to invalidate the former; at least, it should seem that he had a limited power, and therefore not a divine one. Christ soon convinced these *whisperers,* by raising Lazarus from the dead, which was the greater work, that he could have prevented his death, but therefore did not because he would glorify himself the more.

II. Christ's approach to the grave, and the preparation that was made for working this miracle.

1. Christ repeats his groans upon his coming near the grave (*v.* 38): *Again groaning in himself, he comes to the grave;* he groaned, (1.) Being displeased at the unbelief of those who spoke doubtingly of his power, and blamed him for not preventing the death of Lazarus; he was *grieved for the hardness of their hearts.* He never groaned so much for his own pains and sufferings as for the sins and follies of men, particularly Jerusalem's, Matt. xxiii. 37. (2.) Being affected with the fresh lamentations which, it is likely, the mourning sisters made, when they came near the grave, more passionately and pathetically than before, his tender spirit was sensibly touched with their wailings. (3.) Some think that he *groaned in spirit* because, to gratify the desire of his friends, he was to bring Lazarus again into this sinful troublesome world, from that rest into which he was newly entered; it would be a kindness to Martha and Mary, but it would be to him like thrusting one out to a stormy sea again who was newly got into a safe and quiet harbour. If Lazarus had been let alone, Christ would quickly have gone to him into the other world; but, being restored to life, Christ quickly left him behind in this world. (4.) Christ groaned as one that would affect himself with the calamitous state of the human nature, as subject to death, from which he was now about to redeem Lazarus. Thus he stirred up himself to take hold on God in the prayer he was to make, that he might *offer it up with strong crying,* Heb. v. 7. Ministers, when they are sent by the preaching of the gospel to raise dead souls, should be much affected with the deplorable condition of those they preach to and pray for, and groan in themselves to think of it.

2. The grave wherein Lazarus lay is here described: *It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.* The graves of the common people, probably, were dug as ours are; but persons of distinction were, as with us, interred in vaults, so Lazarus was, and such was the sepulchre in which Christ was buried. Probably this fashion was kept up among the Jews, in imitation of the patriarchs, who buried their dead in the cave of Machpelah, Gen. xxiii. 19. This care taken of the dead bodies of their friends intimates their expectation of their resurrection; they reckoned the solemnity of the funeral ended when the stone was rolled to the grave, or, as here, *laid upon it,* like that on the mouth of the den into which Daniel was cast (Dan. vi. 17), that the *purpose might not be changed;* intimating that the dead are separated from the living, and gone the *way whence they shall not return.* This stone was probably a *grave-stone,* with an inscription upon it, which the Greeks called *μνημεῖον—a memorandum,* because it is both a *memorial* of the dead and a *memento* to the living, putting them in remembrance of that which we are all concerned to remember. It is called by the Latins, *Monumentum, à monendo,* because it gives *warning.*

3. Orders are given to remove the stone (*v.* 39): *Take away the stone.* He would have this stone removed, that all the standers-by might see the body lie dead in the sepulchre, and that way might be made for its coming out, and it might appear to be a true body, and not a *ghost* or *spectre.* He would have some of the servants to remove it, that they might be witnesses, by the smell of the putrefaction of the body, and that therefore it was truly dead. It is a good step towards the raising of a soul to spiritual life when the stone is taken away, when prejudices are removed and got over, and way made for the word to the heart, that it may do its work there, and say what it has to say.

4. An objection made by Martha against the opening of the grave: *Lord, by this time he stinketh,* or *is become noisome, for he has been dead four days,* τεταρταῖος γάρ ἐστι, *quatriduanus est;* he is *four days old* in the other world; a citizen and inhabitant of the grave of four days' standing. Probably Martha perceived the body to smell, as they were removing the stone, and therefore cried out thus.

(1.) It is easy to observe hence the nature

of human bodies: four days are but a little while, yet what a great change will this time make with the body of man, if it be but so long *without food,* much more if so long *without life!* Dead bodies (saith Dr. Hammond) after a revolution of the humours, which is completed in seventy-two hours, naturally tend to putrefaction; and the Jews say that by the fourth day after death the body is so altered that one cannot be sure it is such a person; so Maimonides in Lightfoot. Christ rose the third day because he was not to *see corruption.*

(2.) It is not so easy to say what was Martha's design in saying this. [1.] Some think she said it in a due tenderness, and such as decency teaches to the dead body; now that it began to putrefy, she did not care it should be thus publicly shown and made a spectacle of. [2.] Others think she said it out of a concern for Christ, lest the smell of the dead body should be *offensive* to him. That which is very noisome is compared to an open sepulchre, Ps. v. 9. If there were any thing noisome she would not have her Master near it; but he was none of those tender and delicate ones that cannot bear an ill smell; if he had, he would not have visited the world of mankind, which sin had made a perfect dunghill, altogether noisome, Ps. xiv. 3. [3.] It should seem, by Christ's answer, that it was the language of her unbelief and distrust: "Lord, it is too late now to attempt any kindness to him; his body begins to rot, and it is impossible that this putrid carcase should *live.*" She gives up his case as helpless and hopeless, there having been no instances, either of late or formerly, of any raised to life after they had begun to see corruption. When *our bones are dried,* we are ready to say, *Our hope is lost.* Yet this distrustful word of hers served to make the miracle both the more evident and the more illustrious; by this it appeared that he was truly dead, and not in a trance; for, though the posture of a dead body might be counterfeited, the smell could not. Her suggesting that it *could not be done* puts the more honour upon him that *did it.*

5. The gentle reproof Christ gave to Martha for the weakness of her faith (*v.* 40): *Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?* This word of his to her was not before recorded; it is probable that he said it to her when she had said (*v.* 27), *Lord, I believe:* and it is enough that it is recorded here, where it is repeated. Note, (1.) Our Lord Jesus has given us all the assurances imaginable that a sincere faith shall at length be crowned with a blessed vision: "If thou believe, thou shalt see God's glorious appearances for thee in this world, and to thee in the other world." If we will take Christ's word, and rely on his power and faithfulness, we shall see the glory of God, and be happy in the sight. (2.) We have need to be often reminded of these *sure mercies* with which our Lord Jesus hath encouraged us. Christ does not give a direct answer to what Martha had said, nor any particular promise of what he would do, but orders her to keep hold of the general assurances he had already given: *Only believe.* We are apt to forget what Christ has spoken, and need him to put us in mind of it by his Spirit: "*Said I not unto thee* so and so? And dost thou think that he will ever unsay it?"

6. The opening of the grave, in obedience to Christ's order, notwithstanding Martha's objection (*v.* 41): *Then they took away the stone.* When Martha was satisfied, and had waived her objection, *then* they proceeded. If we will see the glory of God, we must let Christ take his own way, and not *prescribe* but *subscribe* to him. *They took away the stone,* and this was all they could do; Christ only could *give life.* What man can do is but to *prepare the way of the Lord,* to fill the valleys, and level the hills, and, as here, to *take away the stone.*

III. The miracle itself wrought. The spectators, invited by the rolling away of the stone, gathered about the grave, not to commit *dust to dust, earth to earth,* but to receive dust from the dust, and earth from the earth again; and, their expectations being raised, our Lord Jesus addresses himself to his work.

1. He applies himself to his *living Father in heaven,* so he had called him (*ch.* vi. 17), and so eyes him here.

(1.) The gesture he used was very significant: *He lifted up his eyes,* an outward expression of the elevation of his mind, and to show those who stood by whence he derived his power; also to set us an example; this outward sign is hereby recommended to our practice; see *ch.* xvii. 1. Look how those will answer it who profanely ridicule it; but that which is especially charged upon us hereby is to *lift up our hearts* to God in the heavens; what is prayer, but the ascent of the soul to God, and the directing of its affections and motions heavenward? He *lifted up* his eyes, as looking above, looking beyond the grave where Lazarus lay, and overlooking all the difficulties that arose thence, that he might have his eyes fixed upon the divine omnipotence; to teach us to do as Abraham, who considered not *his own body now dead, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb,* never took these into his thoughts, and so gained such a degree of faith as not to *stagger at the promise,* Rom. iv. 20.

(2.) His address to God was with great assurance, and such a confidence as became him: *Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.*

[1.] He has here taught us, by his own example, *First,* In prayer to call God Father, and to draw nigh to him as children to a father, with a humble reverence, and yet with a holy boldness. *Secondly,* In our *prayers* to *praise him,* and, when we come to beg for further mercy, thankfully to acknowledge

turn, but to live as other men. [3.] With this additional miracle, as some reckon it, that he came out of his grave, though he was fettered with his grave-clothes, with which he was *bound hand and foot,* and *his face bound about with a napkin* (for so the manner of the Jews was to bury); and he came forth in the same dress wherein he was buried, that it might appear that it was he himself and not another, and that he was not only alive, but strong, and able to walk, after a sort, even in his grave-clothes. The *binding of his face with a napkin* proved that he had been really dead, for otherwise, in less than so many days' time, that would have smothered him. And the standers-by, in unbinding him, would *handle him, and see him, that it was he himself,* and so be witnesses of the miracle. Now see here, *First,* How little we carry away with us, when we leave the world—only a winding-sheet and a coffin; there is no change of raiment in the grave, nothing but a single suit of grave-clothes. *Secondly,* What condition we shall be in in the grave. What *wisdom or device* can there be where the eyes are hoodwinked, or what working where the hands and feet are fettered? And so it will be in the grave, whither we are going. Lazarus being *come forth,* hampered and embarrassed with his grave-clothes, we may well imagine that those about the grave were exceedingly surprised and frightened at it; we should be so if we should see a dead body rise; but Christ, to make the thing familiar, sets them to work: "*Loose him,* slacken his grave-clothes, that they may serve for day-clothes till he comes to his house, and then he will go himself, so clad, without guide or supporter to his own house." As, in the Old Testament, the translations of Enoch and Elias were sensible demonstrations of an invisible and future state, the one about the middle of the patriarchal age, the other of the Mosaic economy, so the resurrection of Lazarus, in the New Testament, was designed for the confirmation of the doctrine of the resurrection.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. 46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. 47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48 If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. 49 And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. 53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. 54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. 55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. 56 Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? 57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should show *it,* that they might take him.

We have here an account of the consequences of this glorious miracle, which were as usual; to some it was a savour of life unto life, to others of death unto death.

I. Some were invited by it, and induced to believe. Many of the Jews, when they *saw the things that Jesus did, believed on him,* and well they might, for it was an incontestable proof of his divine mission. They had often heard of his miracles, and yet evaded the conviction of them, by calling in question the matter of fact; but now that they had themselves seen this done their unbelief was conquered, and they yielded at last. But *blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.* The more we see of Christ the more cause we shall see to love him and confide in him. These were some of those Jews that came to Mary, to comfort her. When we are doing good offices to others we put ourselves in the way of receiving favours from God, and have opportunities of getting good when we are doing good.

II. Others were irritated by it, and hardened in their unbelief.

1. The *informers* were so (*v.* 46): *Some of them,* who were eye-witnesses of the miracle, were so far from being convinced that they *went to the Pharisees,* whom they knew to

be his implacable enemies, and *told them what things Jesus had done;* not merely as a matter of news worthy their notice, much less as an inducement to them to think more favourably of Christ, but with a spiteful design to excite those who needed no spur the more vigorously to prosecute him. Here is a strange instance, (1.) Of a most *obstinate infidelity*, refusing to yield to the most powerful means of conviction; and it is hard to imagine how they could evade the force of this evidence, but that the *god of this world* had *blinded their minds.* (2.) Of a most *inveterate enmity.* If they would not be satisfied that he was to be believed in as the Christ, yet one would think they should have been mollified, and persuaded not to persecute him; but, if the water be not sufficient to *quench* the fire, it will *inflame* it. They told *what Jesus had done,* and told no more than what was true; but their malice gave a tincture of diabolism to their information equal to that of *lying;* perverting what is true is as bad as forging what is false. *Doeg* is called a *false, lying,* and *deceitful tongue* (Ps. lii. 2—4; cxx. 2, 3), though what he said was *true.*

2. The judges, the leaders, the *blind leaders,* of the people were no less exasperated by the report made to them, and here we are told what they did.

(1.) A special council is called and held (*v.* 47): *Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council,* as was foretold, Ps. ii. 2, *The rulers take counsel together against the Lord.* Consultations of the sanhedrim were intended for the public good; but here, under colour of this, the greatest injury and mischief are done to the people. The things that belong to the nation's peace were hid from the eyes of those that were entrusted with its counsels. This council was called, not only for joint advice, but for mutual irritation; that as iron sharpens iron, and as coals are to burning coals and wood to fire, so they might exasperate and inflame one another with enmity and rage against Christ and his doctrine.

(2.) The case is proposed, and shown to be weighty and of great consequence.

[1.] The matter to be debated was what course they should take with this Jesus, to stop the growth of his interest; they said, *What do we? For this man doeth many miracles.* The information given about the raising of Lazarus was produced, and the *men, brethren, and fathers* were called in to help as solicitously as if a formidable enemy had been with an army in the heart of their country. *First,* They own the truth of Christ's miracles, and that he had wrought many of them; they are therefore witnesses against themselves, for they acknowledge his credentials and yet deny his commission. *Secondly,* They consider what is to be done, and chide themselves that they have not done something sooner effectually to crush him. They do not take it at all into their consideration whether they shall not receive him and own him as the Messiah, though they profess to expect him, and Jesus gave pregnant proofs of his being so; but they take it for granted that he is an enemy, and as such is to be run down: "*What do we?* Have we no care to support our church? Is it nothing to us that a doctrine so destructive to our interest spreads thus? Shall we tamely yield up the ground we have got in the affections of the people? Shall we see our authority brought into contempt, and the craft by which we get our living ruined, and not bestir ourselves? What have we been doing all this while? And what are we now thinking of? Shall we be always talking, and bring nothing to pass?"

[2.] That which made this matter weighty was the peril they apprehended their church and nation to be in from the Romans (*v.* 48): "If we do not silence him, and take him off, *all men will believe on him;* and, this being the setting up of a new king, the Romans will take umbrage at it, *and will come* with an army, and *take away our place and nation,* and therefore it is no time to trifle." See what an opinion they have,

First, Of their own *power.* They speak as if they thought Christ's progress and success in his work depended upon their connivance; as if he could not go on to work miracles, and make disciples, unless they *let him alone;* as if it were in their power to conquer him who had conquered death, or as if they could *fight against God,* and prosper. But he that sits in heaven laughs at the fond conceit which impotent malice has of its own omnipotence.

Secondly, Of their own *policy.* They fancy themselves to be men of mighty insight and foresight, and great sagacity in their moral prognostications.

a. They take on them to prophecy that, in a little time, if he have liberty to go on, *all men will believe on him,* hereby owning, when it was to serve their purpose, that his doctrine and miracles had a very convincing power in them, such as could not be resisted, but that all men would become his proselytes and votaries. Thus do they now make his interest formidable, though, to serve another turn, these same men strove to make it contemptible, *ch.* vii. 48, *Have any of the rulers believed on him?* This was the thing they were afraid of, that men would *believe on him,* and then all their measures were broken. Note, The success of the gospel is the dread of its adversaries; if souls be saved, they are undone.

b. They foretel that if the generality of the nation be *drawn after him,* the rage of the Romans will be *drawn upon them.* They *will come and take away our place;* the country in general, especially Jerusalem, or the temple, the *holy place,* and *their* place, their darling, their idol; or, their *preferments*

in the temple, their *places* of power and trust. Now it was true that the Romans had a very jealous eye upon them, and knew they wanted nothing but power and opportunity to shake off their yoke. It was likewise true that if the Romans should pour an army in upon them it would be very hard for them to make any head against it; yet here appeared a cowardice which one would not have found in the priests of the Lord if they had not by their wickedness forfeited their interest in God and all good men. Had they kept their integrity, they needed not to have feared the Romans; but they speak like a dispirited people, as the men of Judah when they basely said to Samson, *Knowest thou not that the Philistines rule over us?* Judg. xv. 11. When men lose their piety they lose their courage. But, (*a.*) It was false that there was any danger of the Romans' being irritated against their nation by the progress of Christ's gospel, for it was no way *hurtful to kings nor provinces,* but highly beneficial. The Romans had no jealousy at all of his growing interest; for he taught men to give tribute to Cæsar, and not to *resist evil,* but to take up the cross. The Roman governor, at his trial, could *find no fault in him.* There was more danger of the Romans' being incensed against the Jewish nation by the priests than by Christ. Note, Pretended fears are often the colour of malicious designs. (*b.*) Had there really been some danger of displeasing the Romans by tolerating Christ's preaching, yet this would not justify their hating and persecuting a good man. Note, [*a.*] The enemies of Christ and his gospel have often coloured their enmity with a seeming care for the *public good* and the *common safety,* and, in order to this, have branded his prophets and ministers as troublers of Israel, and men that *turn the world upside down.* [*b.*] Carnal policy commonly sets up *reasons of state,* in opposition to *rules of justice.* When men are concerned for their own wealth and safety more than for truth and duty, it is wisdom from beneath, which is *earthly, sensual, and devilish.* But see what was the issue; they pretended to be afraid that their tolerating Christ's gospel would bring desolation upon them by the Romans, and therefore, *right or wrong,* set themselves against it; but it proved that their persecuting the gospel brought upon them that which they feared, filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Romans came and *took away their place and nation,* and their place *knows them no more.* Note, That calamity which we seek to escape by sin we take the most effectual course to bring upon our own heads; and those who think by opposing Christ's kingdom to secure or advance their own secular interest will find Jerusalem a more *burdensome stone* than they think it is, Zech. xii. 3. The *fear of the wicked it shall come upon them,* Prov. x. 24.

(3.) Caiaphas makes a malicious but mystical speech in the council on this occasion.

[1.] The *malice* of it appears evident at first view, *v.* 49, 50. He, being the high priest, and so president of the council, took upon him to decide the matter before it was debated: "*You know nothing at all,* your hesitating betrays your ignorance, for it is not a thing that will bear a dispute, it is soon determined, if you consider that received maxim, *That it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people.*" Here,

First, The counsellor was Caiaphas, who was *high priest that same year.* The high priesthood was by divine appointment settled upon the heir male of the house of Aaron, for and during the term of his natural life, and then to his heir male; but in those degenerate times it was become, though not an annual office, like a consulship, yet frequently changed, as they could make an interest with the Roman powers. Now it happened that *this year* Caiaphas wore the mitre.

Secondly, The drift of the advice was, in short, this, That some way or other must be found out to put Jesus to death. We have reason to think that they strongly suspected him to be indeed the Messiah; but his doctrine was so contrary to their darling traditions and secular interest, and his design did so thwart their notions of the Messiah's kingdom, that they resolve, be he who he will, he must be put to death. Caiaphas does not say, Let him be silenced, imprisoned, banished, though amply sufficient for the *restraint* of one they thought dangerous; but *die he must.* Note, Those that have set themselves against Christianity have commonly divested themselves of humanity, and been infamous for cruelty.

Thirdly, This is plausibly insinuated, with all the subtlety as well as malice of the old serpent. 1. He suggests his own sagacity, which we must suppose him as high priest to excel in, though the *Urim* and *Thummim* were long since lost. How scornfully does he say, "*You know nothing,* who are but common priests; but you must give me leave to see further into things than you do!" Thus it is common for those in authority to impose their corrupt dictates by virtue of that; and, because they *should be* the wisest and best, to expect that every body should believe they *are so.* 2. He takes it for granted that the case is plain and past dispute, and that those are very ignorant who do not see it to be so. Note, Reason and justice are often run down with a high hand. *Truth is fallen in the streets,* and, when it is down, down with it; and *equity cannot enter,* and, when it is out, out with it, Isa. lix. 14. 3. He insists upon a maxim in politics, That the welfare of communities is to be preferred before that of particular persons. *It is expedient for us* as priests, whose all lies at stake, that *one man die for the people.* Thus far it holds true, that it is *expedient,* and more

than so, it is truly *honourable*, for a man to hazard his life in the service of his country (Phil. ii. 17; 1 John iii. 16); but to put an innocent man to death under colour of consulting the public safety is the devil's policy. Caiaphas craftily insinuates that the greatest and best man, though *major singulis—greater than any one individual*, is *minor universis—less than the collected mass*, and ought to think his life well spent, nay well lost, to save his country from ruin. But what is this to the murdering of one that was evidently a great blessing under pretence of preventing an imaginary mischief to the country? The case ought to have been put thus: Was it expedient for them to bring upon themselves and upon their nation the guilt of blood, a prophet's blood, for the securing of their civil interests from a danger which they had no just reason to be afraid of? Was it expedient for them to drive God and their glory from them, rather than venture the Romans' displeasure, who could do them no harm if they had God on their side? Note, Carnal policy, which steers only by secular considerations, while it thinks to *save all* by sin, *ruins all* at last.

[2.] The *mystery* that was in this counsel of Caiaphas does not appear at first view, but the evangelist leads us into it (*v.* 51, 52): *This spoke he not of himself*, it was not only the language of his own enmity and policy, but in these words he prophesied, though he himself was not aware of it, *that Jesus should die for that nation.* Here is a precious comment upon a pernicious text; the counsel of cursed Caiaphas so construed as to fall in with the counsels of the blessed God. Charity teaches us to put the most favourable construction upon men's words and actions that they will bear; but piety teaches us to make a good improvement of them, even contrary to that for which they were intended. If wicked men, in what they *do* against us, *are God's hand* to humble and reform us, why may they not in what they say against us be God's mouth to instruct and convince us? But in this of Caiaphas there was an extraordinary direction of Heaven prompting him to say that which was capable of a very sublime sense. As the hearts of all men are in God's hand, so are their tongues. Those are deceived who say, "*Our tongues are our own*, so that either we *may* say what we will, and are not accountable to God's judgment, or we *can* say what we will, and are not restrainable by his providence and power." Balaam could not say what he would, when he came to curse Israel, nor Laban when he pursued Jacob.

(4.) The evangelist explains and enlarges upon Caiaphas's words.

[1.] He explains what he said, and shows how it not only was, but was intended to be, accommodated to an excellent purpose. He did not *speak it of himself*. As it was an artifice to stir up the council against Christ, he spoke it of himself, or of the devil rather; but as it was an *oracle*, declaring it the purpose and design of God by the death of Christ to save God's spiritual Israel from sin and wrath, he did not speak it of himself, for he knew nothing of the matter, he *meant not so, neither did his heart think so*, for nothing was in his heart but to destroy and cut off, Isa. x. 7.

First, He *prophesied*, and those that prophesied did not, in their prophesying, *speak of themselves*. But is Caiaphas also among the prophets? He is so, *pro hâc vice—this once*, though a bad man, and an implacable enemy to Christ and his gospel. Note, 1. God can and often does make wicked men instruments to serve his own purposes, even contrary to their own intentions; for he has them not only *in a chain*, to restrain them from doing the mischief they would, but *in a bridle*, to lead them to do the service they would not. 2. Words of prophecy in the mouth are no infallible evidence of a principle of grace in the heart. *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?* will be rejected as a frivolous plea.

Secondly, He prophesied, *being high priest that year;* not that his being high priest did at all dispose or qualify him to be a prophet; we cannot suppose the pontifical mitre to have first inspired with prophecy the basest head that ever wore it; but, 1. Being high priest, and therefore of note and eminence in the conclave, God was pleased to put this significant word into his mouth rather than into the mouth of any other, that it might be the more observed or the non-observance of it the more aggravated. The apophthegms of great men have been thought worthy of special regard: *A divine sentence is in the lips of the king;* therefore this divine sentence was put into the lips of the high priest, that even out of his mouth this word might be established, That Christ died for *the good of the nation*, and not *for any iniquity in his hands*. He happened to be high priest that year which was fixed to be the *year of the redeemed*, when Messiah the prince *must be cut off, but not for himself* (Dan. ix. 26), and he must own it. 2. Being high priest *that year*, that famous year, in which there was to be such a plentiful effusion of the Spirit, more than had ever been yet, according to the prophecy (Joel ii. 28, 29, compared with Acts ii. 17), some drops of the blessed shower light upon Caiaphas, as the crumbs (says Dr Lightfoot) of the children's bread, which fall from the table among the dogs. This year was the year of the expiration of the Levitical priesthood; and out of the mouth of him who was that year high priest was extorted an implicit resignation of it to him who should not (as they had done for many ages) offer beasts for that nation, but offer himself, and so make an end of the *sin-offering*. This resignation he made *unwittingly*, as Isaac gave the blessing to Jacob.

Thirdly, The matter of his prophecy was *that Jesus should die for that nation*, the very thing to which all the prophets bore witness, who *testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ* (1 Pet. i. 11), that the death of Christ must be the life and salvation of Israel; he meant by *that nation* those in it that obstinately adhered to Judaism, but God meant those in it that would receive the doctrine of Christ, and become followers of him, all believers, the spiritual seed of Abraham. The death of Christ, which Caiaphas was now projecting, proved the ruin of that interest in the nation of which he intended it should be the security and establishment, for it brought wrath upon them to the uttermost; but it proved the advancement of that interest of which he hoped it would have been the ruin, for Christ, being lifted up from the earth, drew all men unto him. It is a great thing that is here prophesied: That Jesus should *die*, die for others, not only *for their good*, but *in their stead, die* for *that nation*, for they had the first offer made them of salvation by his death. If the whole nation of the Jews had unanimously believed in Christ, and received his gospel, they had been not only saved eternally, but saved as a nation from their grievances. The fountain was first *opened to the house of David*, Zech. xiii. 1. He so died for *that nation* as that *the whole nation should not perish*, but that *a remnant should be saved*, Rom. xi. 5.

[2.] The evangelist enlarges upon this word of Caiaphas (*v.* 52), *not for that nation only*, how much soever it thought itself the darling of Heaven, but *that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.* Observe here,

First, The persons Christ died for: *Not for the nation* of the Jews *only* (it would have been comparatively but *a light thing* for the Son of God to go through so vast an undertaking only to restore the *preserved of Jacob*, and *the outcasts of Israel)*; no, he must be *salvation to the ends of the earth*, Isa. xlix. 6. He must die for *the children of God that were scattered abroad.* 1. Some understand it of the children of God that were then *in being*, scattered abroad in the Gentile world, *devout men* of every nation (Acts ii. 5), that *feared God* (Acts x. 2), and worshipped him (Acts xvii. 4), proselytes of the gate, who served the God of Abraham, but submitted not to the ceremonial law of Moses, persons that had a savour of natural religion, but were *dispersed* in the nations, had no solemn assemblies of their own, nor any peculiar profession to unite in or distinguish themselves by. Now Christ died to incorporate these in one great society, to be denominated from him and governed by him; and this was the setting up of a standard, to which all that had a regard to God and a concern for their souls might have recourse, and under which they might enlist themselves. 2. Others take in with these all that belong to the election of grace, who are called the children of God, though not yet born, because they are *predestinated to the adoption of children*, Eph. i. 5. Now these are *scattered abroad* in several *places of the earth*, out of all kindreds and tongues (Rev. vii. 9), and in several *ages of the world*, to the end of time; there are those that *fear him throughout all generations*, to all these he had an eye in the atonement he made by his blood; as he prayed, so he died, for *all that should believe on him.*

Secondly, The purpose and intention of his death concerning those persons; he died to *gather in* those who wandered, and to *gather together in one* those who were scattered; to invite those to him who were at a distance from him, and to unite those in him who were at a distance from each other. Christ's dying is, 1. The great *attractive of our hearts;* for this end he is lifted up, to draw men to him. The conversion of souls is the gathering of them in to Christ as their ruler and refuge, as the doves to their windows; and he died to effect this. By dying he purchased them to himself, and the gift of the Holy Ghost for them; his love in dying for us is the great loadstone of our love. 2. The great *centre of our unity.* He gathers them together *in one*, Eph. i. 10. They are one with him, one body, one spirit, and one with each other in him. All the saints in all places and ages meet in Christ, as all the members in the head, and all the branches in the root. Christ by the merit of his death recommended all the saints in *one* to the grace and favour *of God* (Heb. ii. 11—13), and by the motive of his death recommends them all severally to the love and affection one of another, *ch.* xiii. 34.

(5.) The result of this debate is a resolve of the council to put Jesus to death (*v.* 53): *From that day they took counsel together, to put him to death.* They now understood one another's minds, and so each was fixed in his own, that Jesus must die; and, it should seem, a committee was appointed to sit, *de die in diem—daily*, to consider of it, to consult about it, and to receive proposals for effecting it. Note, The wickedness of the wicked ripens by degrees, James i. 15; Ezek. vii. 10. Two considerable advances were now made in their accursed design against Christ. [1.] What before they had thought of *severally* now they *jointly* concurred in, and so strengthened the hands one of another in this wickedness, and proceeded with the greater assurance. Evil men confirm and encourage themselves and one another in evil practices, by comparing notes; men of corrupt minds bless themselves when they find others of *the same mind:* then the wickedness which before seemed impracticable appears not only possible, but easy to be effected, *vis unita fortior—energies, when united, become more efficient.* [2.] What before they wished done, but *wanted a colour for*, now they are furnished with a plausible pretence to justify themselves in, which will serve, if not to take off the guilt (that is the least of their care),

yet to take off the odium, and so satisfy, if not the personal, yet the political conscience, as some subtly distinguish. Many will go on very securely in doing an evil thing as long as they have but something to say in excuse for it. Now this resolution of theirs to put him to death, right or wrong, proves that all the formality of a trial, which he afterwards underwent, was but show and pretence; they were before determined what to do.

(6.) Christ hereupon absconded, knowing very well what was the vote of their close cabal, *v.* 54.

[1.] He suspended his public appearances: *He walked no more openly among the Jews,* among the inhabitants of Judea, who were properly called Jews, especially those at Jerusalem; *οὐ περιεπάτει—he did not walk up and down* among them, did not go from place to place, preaching and working miracles with the freedom and openness that he had done, but while he staid in Judea, he was there *incognito.* Thus the chief priests put the light of Israel *under a bushel.*

[2.] He withdrew into an obscure part of the country, so obscure that the name of the town he retired to is scarcely met with any where else. He went to a country *near the wilderness,* as if he were driven out from among men, or rather wishing, with Jeremiah, that he might have in the wilderness a *lodging place of way-faring men,* Jer. ix. 2. He entered into a city called Ephraim, some think Ephratah, that is, Bethlehem, where he was born, and which bordered upon the wilderness of Judah; others think Ephron, or Ephraim, mentioned 2 Chron. xiii. 19. Thither his disciples went with him; neither would they leave him in solitude, nor would he leave them in danger. There he continued, *διέτριβε,* there he *conversed,* he knew how to improve this time of retirement in private conversation, when he had not an opportunity of preaching publicly. He *conversed with his disciples,* who were his family, when he was forced from the temple, and his *διάτριβαι,* or *discourses* there, no doubt, were very edifying. We must do the good we can, when we cannot do the good we would. But why would Christ abscond now? It was not because he either feared the power of his enemies or distrusted his own power; he had many ways to save himself, and was neither averse to suffering nor unprepared for it; but he retired, *First,* To put a mark of his displeasure upon Jerusalem and the people of the Jews. They rejected him and his gospel; justly therefore did he remove himself and his gospel from them. The prince of *teachers* was now *removed into a corner* (Isa. xxx. 20); there was *no open vision* of him; and it was a sad presage of that thick darkness which was shortly to come upon Jerusalem, because she knew not the day of her visitation. *Secondly,* To render the cruelty of his enemies against him the more inexcusable. If that which was grievous to them, and thought dangerous to the public, was his *public appearance,* he would try whether their anger would be turned away by his retirement into privacy; when David had fled to Gath, Saul was satisfied, and sought no more for him, 1 Sam. xxvii. 4. But it was the *life,* the precious life, that these wicked men hunted after. *Thirdly,* His hour was *not yet come,* and therefore he declined danger, and did it in a way common to men, both to warrant and encourage the flight of his servants in time of persecution and to comfort those who are forced from their usefulness, and buried alive in privacy and obscurity; *the disciple is not better than his Lord. Fourthly,* His retirement, for awhile, was to make his return into Jerusalem, when his hour was come, the more remarkable and illustrious. This swelled the acclamations of joy with which his well-wishers welcomed him at his next public appearance, when he rode triumphantly into the city.

(7.) The strict enquiry made for him during his recess, *v.* 55—57.

[1.] The occasion of it was the approach of the passover, at which they expected his presence, according to custom (*v.* 55): *The Jews' passover was nigh at hand,* a festival which shone bright in their calendar, and which there was great expectation of for some time before. This was Christ's fourth and last passover, since he entered upon his public ministry, and it might truly be said (as, 2. Chron. xxxv. 18), *There never was such a passover in Israel,* for in it *Christ our passover was sacrificed for us* Now the passover being at hand, *many went out* of all parts of *the country to Jerusalem, to purify themselves.* This was either, *First,* A *necessary purification* of those who had contracted any ceremonial pollution; they came to be sprinkled with the *water of purification,* and to perform the other rites of cleansing according to the law, for they might not eat the passover in their uncleanness, Num. ix. 6. Thus before our gospel passover we must renew our repentance, and by faith wash in the blood of Christ, and so *compass God's altar.* Or, *Secondly,* A *voluntary purification,* or self-sequestration, by fasting and prayer, and other religious exercises, which many that were more devout than their neighbours spent some time in before the passover, and chose to do it at Jerusalem, because of the advantage of the temple-service. Thus must we by solemn preparation set bounds about the mount on which we expect to meet with God.

[2.] The enquiry was very solicitous: *They said, What think you, that he will not come to the feast? v.* 56.

First, Some think this was said by those who wished well to him, and expected his coming, that they might hear his doctrine and see his miracles. Those who came early out of

the country, that they might purify themselves, were very desirous to meet with Christ, and perhaps came up the sooner with that expectation, and therefore *as they stood in the temple*, the place of their purification, they enquired what news of Christ? Could any body give them hopes of seeing him? If there were those, and those of the most devout people, and best affected to religion, who showed this respect to Christ, it was a check to the enmity of the chief priests, and a witness against them.

Secondly, It should rather seem that they were his enemies who made this enquiry after him, who wished for an opportunity to lay hands on him. They, seeing the town begin to fill with devout people out of the country, wondered they did not find him among them. When they should have been assisting those that came to purify themselves, according to the duty of their place, they were plotting against Christ. How miserably degenerate was the Jewish church, when the priests of the Lord were become like the priests of the calves, a *snare upon Mizpeh, and a net spread upon Tabor*, and were *profound to make slaughter* (Hos. v. 1, 2),—when, instead of keeping the feast with unleavened bread, they were themselves soured with the leaven of the worst malice! Their asking, *What think you? Will he not come up to the feast?* implies, 1. An invidious reflection upon Christ, as if he would omit his attendance on the feast of the Lord for fear of exposing himself. If others, through irreligion, be absent, they are not animadverted upon; but if Christ be absent, for his own preservation (for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice), it is turned to his reproach, as it was to David's that his seat was empty at the feast, though Saul wanted him only that he might have an opportunity of nailing him to the wall with his javelin, 1 Sam. xx. 25—27, &c. It is sad to see holy ordinances prostituted to such unholy purposes. 2. A fearful apprehension that they had of missing their game: "*Will he not come up to the feast?* If he do not, our measures are broken, and we are all undone; for there is no sending a pursuivant into the country, to fetch him up."

[3.] The orders issued out by the government for the apprehending of him were very strict, *v.* 57. The great sanhedrim issued out a proclamation, strictly charging and requiring that if any person in city or country *knew where he was* (pretending that he was a criminal, and had fled from justice) they should show it, that he might be taken, probably promising a reward to any that would discover him, and imposing a penalty on such as harboured him; so that hereby he was represented to the people as an obnoxious dangerous man, an outlaw, whom any one might have a blow at. Saul issued out such a proclamation for the apprehending of David, and Ahab of Elijah. See, *First*, How intent they were upon this prosecution, and how indefatigably they laboured in it, now at a time when, if they had had any sense of religion and the duty of their function, they would have found something else to do. *Secondly*, How willing they were to involve others in the guilt with them; if any man were capable of betraying Christ, they would have him think himself bound to do it. Thus was the interest they had in the people abused to the worst purposes. Note, It is an aggravation of the sins of wicked rulers that they commonly make those that are under them instruments of their unrighteousness. But notwithstanding this proclamation, though doubtless many knew where he was, yet such was his interest in the affections of some, and such God's hold of the consciences of others, that he continued undiscovered, for the *Lord hid him*.

CHAP. XII.

It was a melancholy account which we had in the close of the foregoing chapter of the dishonour done to our Lord Jesus, when the scribes and Pharisees proclaimed him a traitor to their church, and put upon him all the marks of ignominy they could: but the story of this chapter balances that, by giving us an account of the honour done to the Redeemer, notwithstanding all that reproach thrown upon him. Thus the one was set over against the other. Let us see what honours were heaped on the head of the Lord Jesus, even in the depths of his humiliation. I. Mary did him honour, by anointing his feet at the supper in Bethany, ver. 1—11. II. The common people did him honour, with their acclamations of joy, when he rode in triumph into Jerusalem, ver. 12—19. III. The Greeks did him honour, by enquiring after him with a longing desire to see him, ver. 20—26. IV. God the Father did him honour, by a voice from heaven, bearing testimony to him, ver. 27—36. V. He had honour done him by the Old-Testament prophets, who foretold the infidelity of those that heard the report of him, ver. 37—41. VI. He had honour done him by some of the chief rulers, whose consciences witnessed for him, though they had not courage to own it, ver. 42, 43. VII. He claimed honour to himself, by asserting his divine mission, and the account he gave of his errand into the world, ver. 44—50.

THEN Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. 2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. 3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. 4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, which should betray him, 5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. 8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. 9 Much

people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; 11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

In these verses we have,

I. The *kind visit* our Lord Jesus paid to his friends at Bethany, *v.* 1. He came up out of the country, *six days before the passover*, and took up at Bethany, a town which, according to the computation of our metropolis, lay so near Jerusalem as to be within the bills of mortality. He lodged here with his friend Lazarus, whom he had lately *raised from the dead.* His coming to Bethany now may be considered,

1. As a preface to the passover he intended to celebrate, to which reference is made in assigning the date of his coming: *Six days before the passover.* Devout men set time apart before, to prepare themselves for that solemnity, and thus it became our Lord Jesus to *fulfil all righteousness.* Thus he has set us an example of solemn self-sequestration, before the solemnities of the gospel passover; let us hear the voice crying, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord.*

2. As a voluntary exposing of himself to the fury of his enemies; now that his hour was at hand he came within their reach, and freely offered himself to them, though he had shown them how easily he could evade all their snares. Note, (1.) Our Lord Jesus was voluntary in his sufferings; his life was not *forced* from him, but *resigned: Lo, I come.* As the strength of his persecutors could not overpower him, so their subtlety could not surprise him, but he died because he would. (2.) As there is a time when we are allowed to shift for our own preservation, so there is a time when we are called to hazard our lives in the cause of God, as St. Paul, when he *went bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem.*

3. As an instance of his kindness to his friends at Bethany, whom he loved, and from whom he was shortly to be taken away. This was a farewell visit; he came to take leave of them, and to leave with them words of comfort against the day of trial that was approaching. Note, Though Christ depart for a time from his people, he will give them intimations that he departs in love, and not in anger. Bethany is here described to be the town *where Lazarus was, whom he raised from the dead.* The miracle wrought here put a new honour upon the place, and made it remarkable. Christ came hither to observe what improvement was made of this miracle; for where Christ works wonders, and shows signal favours, he looks after them, to see whether the intention of them be answered. Where he has sown plentifully, he observes whether it comes up again.

II. The *kind entertainment* which his friends there gave him: They *made him a supper* (*v.* 2), a great supper, a feast. It is queried whether this was the same with that which is recorded, Matt. xxvi. 6, &c., in the house of Simon. Most commentators think it was; for the substance of the story and many of the circumstances agree; but that comes in after what was said *two days* before the passover, whereas this was done *six days* before; nor is it likely that Martha should serve in any house but her own; and therefore I incline with Dr. Lightfoot to think them different: that in Matthew on the third day of the passover week, but this the seventh day of the week before, being the Jewish sabbath, the night before he rode in triumph into Jerusalem; that in the house of Simon; this of Lazarus. These two being the most public and solemn entertainments given him in Bethany, Mary probably graced them *both* with this token of her respect; and what she *left* of her ointment this first time, when she spent but a *pound* of it (*v.* 3), she used that second time, when she *poured it all out,* Mark xiv. 3. Let us see the account of this entertainment. 1. They *made him a supper;* for with them, ordinarily, supper was the best meal. This they did in token of their respect and gratitude, for a feast is made for *friendship;* and that they might have an opportunity of free and pleasant conversation with him, for a feast is made for *fellowship.* Perhaps it is in allusion to this and the like entertainments given to Christ in the days of his flesh that he promises, to such as open the door of their hearts to him, that he will *sup with them,* Rev. iii. 20. 2. Martha *served;* she herself waited at table, in token of her great respect to the Master. Though a person of some quality, she did not think it below her to *serve,* when Christ sat at meat; nor should we think it a dishonour or disparagement to us to stoop to any service whereby Christ may be honoured. Christ had formerly reproved Martha for being *troubled with much serving.* But she did not therefore leave off serving, as some, who, when they are reproved for one extreme, peevishly run into another; no, still she *served;* not as then at a distance, but *within hearing* of Christ's gracious words, reckoning those happy who, as the queen of Sheba said concerning Solomon's servants, stood continually before him, to hear his wisdom; better be a *waiter* at Christ's table than a *guest* at the table of a prince. 3. Lazarus was *one of those that sat at meat.* It proved the truth of his resurrection, as it did of Christ's, that there were those who did *eat and drink with him,* Acts x. 41. Lazarus did not retire into a *wilderness* after his resurrection, as if, when

he had made a visit to the other world, he must ever after be a hermit in this; no, he conversed familiarly with people, as others did. He *sat at meat*, as a monument of the miracle Christ had wrought. Those whom Christ has *raised up* to a spiritual life are made to *sit together with him*. See Eph. ii. 5, 6.

III. The particular respect which Mary showed him, above the rest, in anointing his feet with sweet ointment, *v.* 3. She had a *pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly*, which probably she had by her for her own use; but the death and resurrection of her brother had quite weaned her from the use of all such things, and with this she *anointed the feet of Jesus*, and, as a further token of her reverence for him and negligence of herself, she *wiped them with her hair*, and this was taken notice of by all that were present, for *the house was filled with the odour of the ointment*. See Prov. xxvii. 16.

1. Doubtless she intended this as a token of her love to Christ, who had given real tokens of his love to her and her family; and thus she studies what she shall render. Now by this her love to Christ appears to have been, (1.) A *generous* love; so far from sparing necessary charges in his service, she is as ingenious to *create* an occasion of expense in religion as most are to avoid it. If she had any thing more valuable than another, that must be brought out for the honour of Christ. Note, Those who love Christ truly love him so much better than this world as to be willing to lay out the best they have for him. (2.) A *condescending* love; she not only bestowed her ointment upon Christ, but with her own hands poured it upon him, which she might have ordered one of her servants to have done; nay, she did not, as usual, anoint his *head* with it, but his *feet*. True love, as it does not spare charges, so it does not spare pains, in honouring Christ. Considering what Christ has done and suffered for us, we are very ungrateful if we think any service too hard to do, or too mean to stoop to, whereby he may *really* be glorified. (3.) A *believing* love; there was faith working by this love, faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed, who, being both priest and king, was anointed as Aaron and David were. Note, *God's Anointed* should be *our Anointed*. Has God poured on him the oil of gladness above his fellows? Let us pour on him the ointment of our best affections above all competitors. By consenting to Christ as *our* king, we must comply with God's designs, appointing him *our head* whom he has appointed, Hos. i. 11.

2. The *filling of the house* with the pleasant *odour of the ointment* may intimate to us, (1.) That those who entertain Christ in their hearts and houses bring a sweet odour into them; Christ's presence brings with it an ointment and *perfume which rejoice the heart*. (2.) Honours done to Christ are comforts to all his friends and followers; they are to God and good men an offering of a *sweet-smelling savour*.

IV. Judas's dislike of Mary's compliment, or token of her respect to Christ, *v.* 4, 5, where observe,

1. The person that carped at it was Judas, *one of his disciples;* not one of their nature, but only one of their number. It is possible for the worst of men to lurk under the disguise of the best profession; and there are many who pretend to stand in relation to Christ who really have no kindness for him. Judas was an apostle, a preacher of the gospel, and yet one that discouraged and checked this instance of pious affection and devotion. Note, It is sad to see the life of religion and holy zeal frowned upon and discountenanced by such as are bound by their office to assist and encourage it. But this was he that should *betray Christ*. Note, Coldness of love to Christ, and a secret contempt of serious piety, when they appear in professors of religion, are sad presages of a final apostasy. Hypocrites, by less instances of worldliness, discover themselves to be ready for a compliance with greater temptations.

2. The pretence with which he covered his dislike (*v.* 5): "*Why was not this ointment*, since it was designed for a pious use, sold for three hundred pence" (8*l.* 10*s.* of our money), "and *given to the poor?*" (1.) Here is a foul iniquity gilded over with a specious and plausible pretence, for Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. (2.) Here is worldly wisdom passing a censure upon pious zeal, as guilty of imprudence and mismanagement. Those who value themselves upon their *secular policy*, and undervalue others for their *serious piety*, have more in them of the spirit of Judas than they would be thought to have. (3.) Here is charity to the poor made a colour for opposing a piece of piety to Christ, and secretly made a cloak for covetousness. Many excuse themselves from *laying out* in charity under pretence of *laying up* for charity: whereas, if the clouds be full of rain, they will *empty themselves*. Judas asked, *Why was it not given to the poor?* To which it is easy to answer, Because it was better bestowed upon the Lord Jesus. Note, We must not conclude that those do no acceptable piece of service who do not do it in our way, and just as we would have them; as if every thing must be adjudged imprudent and unfit which does not take its measures from us and our sentiments. Proud men think all ill-advised who do not advise with them.

3. The detection and discovery of Judas's hypocrisy herein, *v.* 6. Here is the evangelist's remark upon it, by the direction of him who *searches the heart: This he said, not that he cared for the poor*, as he pretended, *but because he was a thief, and had the bag*.

(1.) It did not come from a principle of charity: *Not that he cared for the poor*. He

had no compassion towards them, no concern for them: what were the poor to him any further than he might serve his own ends by being overseer of the poor? Thus some warmly contend for the *power* of the church, as others for its *purity*, when perhaps it may be said, Not that they care for the church; it is all one to them whether its *true interest* sink or swim, but under the pretence of this they are advancing themselves. Simeon and Levi pretended zeal for circumcision, *not that they cared* for the seal of the covenant, any more than Jehu for the Lord of hosts, when he said, *Come see my zeal.*

(2.) It did come from a principle of covetousness. The truth of the matter was, this ointment being designed for his Master, he would rather have had it in money, to be put in the common stock with which he was entrusted, and then he knew what to do with it. Observe,

[1.] Judas was treasurer of Christ's household, whence some think he was called *Iscariot*, the *bag-bearer*. *First*, See what *estate* Jesus and his disciples had to live upon. It was but *little;* they had neither farms nor merchandise, neither barns nor storehouses, only a *bag;* or, as some think the word signifies, a *box*, or *coffer*, wherein they kept just enough for their subsistence, giving the overplus, if any were, to the poor; this they carried about with them, wherever they went. *Omnia mea mecum porto—I carry all my property about me.* This bag was supplied by the contributions of good people, and the Master and his disciples had all *in common;* let this lessen our esteem of worldly wealth, and deaden us to the punctilios of state and ceremony, and reconcile us to a mean and despicable way of living, if this be our lot, that it was our Master's lot; for our sakes he *became poor*. *Secondly*, See who was the *steward* of the little they had; it was Judas, he was purse-bearer. It was his office to receive and pay, and we do not find that he gave any account what markets he made. He was appointed to this office, either, 1. Because he was the least and lowest of all the disciples; it was not Peter nor John that was made steward (though it was a place of trust and profit), but Judas, the meanest of them. Note, Secular employments, as they are a digression, so they are a degradation to a minister of the gospel; see 1 Cor. vi. 4. The prime-ministers of state in Christ's kingdom refused to be concerned in the revenue, Acts vi. 2. 2. Because he was desirous of the place. He loved in his heart to be fingering money, and therefore had the money-bag committed to him, either, (1.) As a kindness, to please him, and thereby oblige him to be true to his Master. Subjects are sometimes disaffected to the government because disappointed of their preferment; but Judas had no cause to complain of this; the bag he chose, and the bag he had. Or, (2.) In judgment upon him, to punish him for his secret wickedness; that was put into his hands which would be a snare and trap to him. Note, Strong inclinations to sin within are often justly punished with strong temptations to sin without. We have little reason to be fond of the bag, or proud of it, for at the best we are but stewards of it; and it was Judas, one of an ill character, and born to be hanged (pardon the expression), that was steward of the bag. *The prosperity of fools destroys them*

[2.] Being trusted with the bag, he was *a thief*, that is, he had a thievish disposition. The reigning love of money is *heart-theft* as much as anger and revenge are *heart-murder*. Or perhaps he had been really guilty of embezzling his Master's stores, and converting to his own use what was given to the public stock. And some conjecture that he was now contriving to fill his pockets, and then run away and leave his Master, having heard him speak so much of troubles approaching, to which he could by no means reconcile himself. Note, Those to whom the management and disposal of public money is committed have need to be governed by steady principles of justice and honesty, that no blot cleave to their hands; for though some make a jest of cheating the government, or the church, or the country, if cheating be *thieving*, and, communities being more considerable than particular persons, if robbing them be the greater sin, the guilt of theft and the portion of thieves will be found no jesting matter. Judas, who had betrayed his trust, soon after betrayed his Master.

V. Christ's justification of what Mary did (*v.* 7, 8): *Let her alone.* Hereby he intimated his acceptance of her kindness (though he was perfectly mortified to all the delights of sense, yet, as it was a token of her good-will, he signified himself well-pleased with it), and his care that she should not be molested in it: *Pardon her*, so it may be read; "excuse her this once, if it be an error it is an error of her love." Note, Christ would not have those censured nor discouraged who sincerely design to please him, though in their honest endeavours there be not all the discretion that may be, Rom. xiv. 3. Though we would not do as they do, yet *let them alone.* For Mary's justification,

1. Christ puts a favourable construction upon what she did, which those that condemned it were not aware of: *Against the day of my burying she has kept this.* Or, *She has reserved this for the day of my embalming;* so Dr. Hammond. "You do not grudge the ointment used for the embalming of your dead friends, nor say that it should be sold, and given to the poor. Now this anointing either was so *intended*, or at least may be so *interpreted;* for the day of my burying is now at hand, and she has anointed a body that is already *as good as dead.*" Note, (1.) Our Lord Jesus thought much and often of his own death and burial; it

would be good for us to do so too. (2.) Providence does often so open a door of opportunity to good Christians, and the Spirit of grace does so open their hearts, that the expressions of their pious zeal prove to be more *seasonable*, and more *beautiful*, than any foresight of their own could make them. (3.) The grace of Christ puts kind comments upon the pious words and actions of good people, and not only makes the best of what is amiss, but makes the most of what is good.

2. He gives a sufficient answer to Judas's objection, *v.* 8. (1.) It is so ordered in the kingdom of Providence that *the poor we have always with us*, some or other that are proper objects of charity (Deut. xv. 11); such there will be as long as there are in this lapsed state of mankind so much folly and so much affliction. (2.) It is so ordered in the kingdom of grace that the church should not always have the bodily presence of Jesus Christ: "*Me you have not always*, but only now for a little time." Note, We need wisdom, when two duties come in competition, to know which to give the preference to, which must be determined by the circumstances. Opportunities are to be improved, and those opportunities first and most vigorously which are likely to be of the shortest continuance, and which we see most speedily hastening away. That good duty which may be done *at any time* ought to give way to that which cannot be done but *just now*.

VI. The public notice which was taken of our Lord Jesus here at this supper in Bethany (*v.* 9): *Much people of the Jews knew that he was there*, for he was the talk of the town, and *they came* flocking thither; the more because he had lately absconded, and now broke out as the sun from behind a dark cloud. 1. They came to see Jesus, whose name was very much magnified, and made considerable by the late miracle he had wrought in raising Lazarus. They came, not to hear him, but to gratify their curiosity with a sight of him here at Bethany, fearing he would not appear publicly, as he used to do, this passover. They came, not to seize him, or inform against him, though the government had prosecuted him to an outlawry, but to see him, and show him respect. Note, There are some in whose affections Christ will have an interest, in spite of all the attempts of his enemies to misrepresent him. It being known where Christ was, multitudes came to him. Note, Where the king is there is the court; where Christ is there will the *gathering of the people be*, Luke xvii. 37. 2. They came to see Lazarus and Christ together, which was a very inviting sight. Some came for the confirmation of their faith in Christ, to have the story perhaps from Lazarus's own mouth. Others came only for the gratifying of their curiosity, that they might say they had seen a man who had been dead and buried, and yet lived again; so that Lazarus served for a *show*, these holy-days, to those who, like the Athenians, spent their time in telling and hearing new things. Perhaps some came to put curious questions to Lazarus about the state of the dead, to ask what news from the other world; we ourselves have sometimes said, it may be, We would have gone a great way for one hour's discourse with Lazarus. But if any came on this errand it is probable that Lazarus was silent, and gave them no account of his voyage; at least, the scripture is silent, and gives us no account of it; and we must not covet to be wise above what is written. But our Lord Jesus was present, who was a much fitter person for them to apply to than Lazarus; for if we hear not Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, if we heed not what they tell us concerning another world, neither should we be persuaded though Lazarus rose from the dead. We have a more sure word of prophecy.

VII. The indignation of the chief priests at the growing interest of our Lord Jesus, and their plot to crush it (*v.* 10, 11): They *consulted* (or decreed) *how they might put Lazarus also to death*, because that *by reason of him* (of what was done to him, not of any thing he said or did) *many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus*. Here observe,

1. How vain and unsuccessful their attempts against Christ had hitherto been. They had done all they could to alienate the people from him, and exasperate them against him, and yet many of the Jews, their neighbours, their creatures, their admirers, were so overcome by the convincing evidence of Christ's miracles that they *went away* from the interest and party of the priests, went off from obedience to their tyranny, *and believed on Jesus*; and it was by reason of Lazarus; his resurrection put life into their faith, and convinced them that this Jesus was undoubtedly the Messiah, and had life in himself, and power to give life. This miracle confirmed them in the belief of his other miracles, which they had heard he wrought in Galilee: what was impossible to him that could raise the dead?

2. How absurd and unreasonable this day's vote was—that Lazarus must be put to death. This is an instance of the most brutish rage that could be; they were like a *wild bull in a net*, full of fury, and laying about them without any consideration. It was a sign that they *neither feared God nor regarded man*. For, (1.) If they had feared God, they would not have done such an act of defiance to him. God will have Lazarus to live by miracle, and they will have him to die by malice. They cry, *Away with such a fellow, it is not fit he should live*, when God had so lately sent him back to the earth, declaring it highly fit he should live; what was this but *walking contrary to God?* They would put Lazarus to death, and challenge almighty power to raise him again, as if they could

contend with God, and try titles with the King of kings. Who has the keys of death and the grave, he or they? *O cæca malitia! Christus qui suscitare potuit mortuum, non possit occisum.—Blind malice, to suppose that Christ, who could raise one that had died a natural death, could not raise one that had been slain!*—Augustine in loc. Lazarus is singled out to be the object of their special hatred, because God has distinguished him by the tokens of his peculiar love, as if they had made a league offensive and defensive with death and hell, and resolved to be severe upon all deserters. One would think that they should rather have consulted how they might have joined in friendship with Lazarus and his family, and by their mediation have reconciled themselves to this Jesus whom they had persecuted; but the god of this world had *blinded their minds.* (2.) If they had regarded man, they would not have done such an act of injustice to Lazarus, an innocent man, to whose charge they could not pretend to lay any crime. What bands are strong enough to hold those who can so easily break through the most sacred ties of common justice, and violate the maxims which even nature itself teaches? But the support of their own tyranny and superstition was thought sufficient, as in the church of Rome, not only to justify, but to consecrate the greatest villanies, and make them meritorious.

12 On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried Hosanna: Blessed *is* the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. 14 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, 15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. 16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him. 17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. 18 For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. 19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

This story of Christ's riding in triumph to Jerusalem is recorded by all the evangelists, as worthy of special remark; and in it we may observe,

I. The respect that was paid to our Lord Jesus by the common people, *v.* 12, 13, where we are told,

1. Who they were that paid him this respect: *much people,* ὄχλος πολὺς—*a great crowd* of those that came up to the feast; not the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but the country people that came from remote parts to worship at the feast; the nearer the temple of the Lord, the further from the Lord of the temple. They were such as *came up to the feast.* (1.) Perhaps they had been Christ's hearers in the country, and great admirers of him there, and therefore were forward to testify their respect to him at Jerusalem, where they knew he had many enemies. Note, Those that have a true value and veneration for Christ will neither be ashamed nor afraid to own him before men in any instance whereby they may do him honour. (2.) Perhaps they were those more *devout Jews* that came up to the feast some time before, to purify themselves, that were more inclined to religion than their neighbours, and these were they that were so forward to honour Christ. Note, The more regard men have to God and religion in general, the better disposed they will be to entertain Christ and his religion, which is not destructive but perfective of all previous discoveries and institutions. They were not the rulers, nor the great men, that went out to meet Christ, but the commonalty; some would have called them a mob, a rabble: but Christ has chosen the weak and foolish things (1 Cor. i. 27), and is honoured more by the multitude than by the magnificence of his followers; for he values men by their souls, not their names and titles of honour.

2. On what occasion they did it: *They heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.* They had enquired for him (*ch.* xi. 55, 56): *Will he not come up to the feast?* And now they hear he is coming; for none that seek Christ seek in vain. Now when they heard he was coming, they bestirred themselves, to give him an agreeable reception. Note, Tidings of the approach of Christ and his kingdom should awaken us to consider what is the work of the day, that it may be done in the day. Israel must prepare to meet *their God* (Amos iv. 12), and the virgins to *meet the bridegroom.*

3. In what way they expressed their respect; they had not the keys of the city to present to him, nor the sword nor mace to carry before him, none of the city music to compliment him with, but such as they had they gave him; and even this despicable crowd was a faint resemblance of that glorious company which John saw *before the throne, and before the Lamb,* Rev. vii. 9, 10. Though these were not before the throne,

they were before the Lamb, the paschal Lamb, who now, according to the usual ceremony, four days before the feast, was set apart to be sacrificed for us. There it is said of that celestial choir,

(1.) That they had palms in their hands, and so had these *branches of palm-trees.* The palm-tree has ever been an emblem of victory and triumph; Cicero calls one that had won many prizes *plurimarum palmarum homo—a man of many palms.* Christ was now by his death to conquer principalities and powers, and therefore it was fit that he should have the victor's palm borne before him; though he was but girding on the harness, yet he could boast as though he had put it off. But this was not all; the carrying of palm-branches was part of the ceremony of the feast of tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 40; Neh. viii. 15), and their using this expression of joy in the welcome given to our Lord Jesus intimates that all the feasts pointed at his gospel, had their accomplishment in it, and particularly that of the feast of tabernacles, Zech. xiv. 16.

(2.) That they *cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God* (Rev. vii. 10); so did these here, they shouted before him, as is usual in popular welcomes, *Hosanna, blessed is the king of Israel, that comes in the name of the Lord;* and *hosanna* signifies *salvation.* It is quoted from Ps. cxviii. 25, 26. See how well acquainted these common people were with the scripture, and how pertinently they apply it to the Messiah. High thoughts of Christ will be best expressed in scripture-words. Now in their acclamations, [1.] They acknowledge our Lord Jesus to be the king of Israel, that comes *in the name of the Lord.* Though he went now in poverty and disgrace, yet, contrary to the notions their scribes had given them of the Messiah, they own him to be a king, which bespeaks both his dignity and honour, which we must adore; and his dominion and power, to which we must submit. They own him to be, *First,* A rightful king, coming in *the name of the Lord* (Ps. ii. 6), sent of God, not only as a prophet, but as a king. *Secondly,* The promised and long-expected king, Messiah the prince, for he is *king of Israel.* According to the light they had, they proclaimed him king of Israel in the streets of Jerusalem; and, they themselves being Israelites, hereby they avouched him for their king. [2.] They heartily wish well to his kingdom, which is the meaning of hosanna; let the king of Israel prosper, as when Solomon was crowned they cried, *God save king Solomon,* 1 Kings i. 39. In crying hosanna they prayed for three things:—*First,* That his kingdom might come, in the light and knowledge of it, and in the power and efficacy of it. God speed the gospel plough. *Secondly,* That it might conquer, and be victorious over all opposition, Rev. vi. 2. *Thirdly,* That it might continue. Hosanna is, *Let the king live for ever;* though his kingdom may be disturbed, let it never be destroyed, Ps. lxxii. 17. [3.] They bid him welcome into Jerusalem: "*Welcome is he that cometh;* we are heartily glad to see him; *come in thou blessed of the Lord;* and well may we attend with our blessings him who meets us with his." This welcome is like that (Ps. xxiv. 7—9), *Lift up your heads, O ye gates.* Thus we must every one of us bid Christ welcome into our hearts, that is, we must praise him, and be well pleased in him. As we should be highly pleased with the being and attributes of God, and his relation to us, so we should be with the person and offices of the Lord Jesus, and his mediation between us and God. Faith saith, *Blessed is he that cometh.*

II. The posture Christ puts himself into for receiving the respect that was paid him (*v.* 14): *When he had found,* or procured, *a young ass,* he *sat thereon.* It was but a poor sort of figure he made, he alone upon an ass, and a crowd of people about him shouting *Hosanna.* 1. This was much more of state than he used to take; he used to travel on foot, but now was mounted. Though his followers should be willing to take up with mean things, and not affect any thing that looks like grandeur, yet they are allowed to use the service of the inferior creatures, according as God in his providence gives particular possession of those things over which, by his covenant with Noah and his sons, he has given to man a general dominion. 2. Yet it was much less of state than the great ones of the world usually take. If he would have made a public entry, according to the state of a man of high degree, he should have rode in a chariot like that of Solomon's (Cant. iii. 9, 10), with *pillars of silver,* the *bottom of gold,* and the *covering of purple;* but, if we judge according to the fashion of this world, to be introduced thus was rather a disparagement than any honour to the king of Israel, for it seemed as if he would look great, and knew not how. His kingdom was not of this world, and therefore came not with outward pomp. He was now humbling himself, but in his exalted state John sees him in a vision *on a white horse, with a bow and a crown.*

III. The fulfilling of the scripture in this: *As it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion,* *v.* 15. This is quoted from Zech. ix. 9. To him bore all the prophets witness, and particularly to this concerning him.

1. It was foretold that Zion's king should come, should come *thus, sitting on an ass's colt;* even this minute circumstance was foretold, and Christ took care it should be punctually fulfilled. Note, (1.) Christ is Zion's king; the holy hill of Zion was of old destined to be the metropolis or royal city of the Messiah. (2.) Zion's king does and will look after her, and come to her; though for a short time he retires, in due time he returns. (3.) Though he comes but slowly

(an ass is slow-paced), yet he comes surely, and with such expressions of humility and condescension as greatly encourage the addresses and expectations of his loyal subjects. Humble supplicants may reach to speak with him. If this be a discouragement to Zion, that her king appears in no greater state or strength, let her know that though he comes to her riding on an ass's colt, yet he goes forth against her enemies riding *on the heavens for her help*, Deut. xxxiii. 26.

2. The daughter of Zion is therefore called upon to *behold her king*, to take notice of him and his approaches; behold and wonder, for he comes with observation, though not with outward show, Cant. iii. 11. *Fear not.* In the prophecy, Zion is told to rejoice greatly, and to shout, but here it is rendered, *Fear not.* Unbelieving fears are enemies to spiritual joys; if they be cured, if they be conquered, joy will come of course; Christ comes to his people to *silence* their fears. If the case be so that we cannot reach to the exultations of joy, yet we should labour to get from under the oppressions of fear. *Rejoice greatly;* at least, *fear not.*

IV. The remark made by the evangelist respecting the disciples (*v.* 16): *They understood not at first* why Christ did this, and how the scripture was fulfilled; but when *Jesus was glorified*, and thereupon the Spirit poured out, then they remembered that *these things were written of him* in the Old Testament, and that they and others had, in pursuance thereof, *done these things to him.*

1. See here the imperfection of the disciples in their infant state; even *they understood not these things at first.* They did not consider, when they fetched the ass and set him thereon, that they were performing the ceremony of the inauguration of Zion's king. Now observe, (1.) The scripture is often fulfilled by the agency of those who have not themselves an eye to the scripture in what they do, Isa. xlv. 4. (2.) There are many excellent things, both in the word and providence of God, which the disciples themselves do not at first understand: not at their first acquaintance with the things of God, while they *see men as trees walking;* not at the first proposal of the things to their view and consideration. That which afterwards is clear was at first dark and doubtful. (3.) It well becomes the disciples of Christ, when they are grown up to maturity in knowledge, frequently to reflect upon the follies and weaknesses of their first beginning, that free grace may have the glory of their proficiency, and they may have compassion on the ignorant. *When I was a child, I spoke as a child.*

2. See here the improvement of the disciples in their adult state. Though they had been children, they were not always so, but went on to perfection. Observe,

(1.) When they understood it: *When Jesus was glorified;* for, [1.] Till then they did not rightly apprehend the nature of his kingdom, but expected it to appear in external pomp and power, and therefore knew not how to apply the scriptures which spoke of it to so mean an appearance. Note, The right understanding of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, of its powers, glories, and victories, would prevent our misinterpreting and misapplying the scriptures that speak of it. [2.] Till then the Spirit was not poured out, who was to lead them into all truth. Note, The disciples of Christ are enabled to understand the scriptures by the same Spirit that indited the scriptures. *The Spirit of revelation is* to all the saints a *spirit of wisdom*, Eph. i. 17, 18.

(2.) How they understood it; they compared the prophecy with the event, and put them together, that they might mutually receive light from each other, and so they came to understand both: *Then remembered they that these things were written of him* by the prophets, consonant to which they were done to him. Note, Such an admirable harmony there is between the word and works of God that the remembrance of what is written will enable us to understand what is done, and the observation of what is done will help us to understand what is written. *As we have heard, so have we seen.* The scripture is every day fulfilling.

V. The reason which induced the people to pay this respect to our Lord Jesus upon his coming into Jerusalem, though the government was so much set against him. It was because of the illustrious miracle he had lately wrought in raising Lazarus.

1. See here what account and what assurance they had of this miracle; no doubt, the city rang of it, the report of it was in all people's mouths. But those who considered it as a proof of Christ's mission, and a ground of their faith in him, that they might be well satisfied of the matter of fact, traced the report to those who were eye-witnesses of it, that they might *know the certainty* of it by the utmost evidence the thing was capable of: *The people therefore that* stood by *when he called Lazarus* out of his grave, being found out and examined, *bore record, v.* 17. They unanimously averred the thing to be true, beyond dispute or contradiction, and were ready, if called to it, to depose it upon oath, for so much is implied in the word Ἐμαρτύρει. Note, The truth of Christ's miracles was evidenced by incontestable proofs. It is probable that those who had seen this miracle did not only assert it to those who asked them, but published it unasked, that this might add to the triumphs of this solemn day; and Christ's coming in now from Bethany, where it was done, would put them in mind of it. Note, Those who wish well to Christ's kingdom should be forward to proclaim what they know that may redound to his honour.

2. What improvement they made of it, and what influence it had upon them (*v.* 18):

For this cause, as much as any other, *the people met him.* (1.) Some, out of curiosity, were desirous to see one that had done such a wonderful work. Many a good sermon he had preached in Jerusalem, which drew not such crowds after him as this one miracle did. But, (2.) Others, out of conscience, studied to do him honour, as one sent of God. This miracle was reserved for one of the last, that it might confirm those which went before, and might gain him this honour just before his sufferings; Christ's works were all not only *well done* (Mark vii. 7) but *well timed.*

VI. The indignation of the Pharisees at all this; some of them, probably, saw, and they all soon heard of, Christ's public entry. The committee appointed to find out expedients to crush him thought they had gained their point when he had retired unto privacy, and that he would soon be forgotten in Jerusalem, but they now rage and fret when they see they imagined but a *vain thing.* 1. They own that they had got no ground against him; it was plainly to be perceived that they *prevailed nothing.* They could not, with all their insinuations, alienate the people's affections from him, nor with their menaces restrain them from showing their affection to him. Note, Those who oppose Christ, and fight against his kingdom, will be made to perceive that they prevail nothing. God will accomplish his own purposes in spite of them, and the little efforts of their impotent malice. *You prevail nothing,* οὐκ ὠφελεῖτε—*you profit nothing.* Note, There is nothing got by opposing Christ. 2. They own that he had got ground: *The world is gone after him;* there is a vast crowd attending him, a *world of people:* an hyperbole common in most languages. Yet here, like Caiaphas, ere they were aware, they prophesied that *the world would go after him;* some of all sorts, some from all parts; nations shall be discipled. But to what intent was this said? (1.) Thus they *express* their own vexation at the growth of his interest; their envy makes them fret. If the *horn of the righteous be exalted with honour, the wicked see it, and are grieved* (Ps. cxii. 9, 10); considering how great these Pharisees were, and what abundance of respect was paid them, one would think they needed not grudge Christ so inconsiderable a piece of honour as was now done him; but proud men would monopolize honour, and have none share with them, like Haman. (2.) Thus they excite themselves and one another, to a more vigorous carrying on of the war against Christ. As if they should say, "Dallying and delaying thus will never do. We must take some other and more effectual course, to put a stop to this infection; it is time to try our utmost skill and force, before the grievance grows past redress." Thus the enemies of religion are made more resolute and active by being baffled; and shall its friends be disheartened with every disappointment, who know its cause is righteous and will at last be victorious?

20 And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: 21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. 22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

Honour is here paid to Christ by certain Greeks that enquired for him with respect. We are not told what day of Christ's last week this was, probably not the same day he rode into Jerusalem (for that day was taken up in public work), but a day or two after.

I. We are told who they were that paid this honour to our Lord Jesus: *Certain Greeks among* the people who *came up to worship at the feast, v.* 20. Some think they were *Jews of the dispersion,* some of the twelve tribes that were scattered among the Gentiles, and were called *Greeks,* Hellenist Jews; but others think they were Gentiles, those whom they called *proselytes of the gate,* such as the eunuch and Cornelius. Pure natural religion met with the best assistance among the Jews, and therefore those among the Gentiles who were piously inclined joined with them in their solemn meetings, as far as was allowed them. There were devout worshippers of the true God even among those that were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. It was in the latter ages of the Jewish church that there was this flocking of the Gentiles to the temple at Jerusalem,—a happy presage of the taking down of the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles. The forbidding of the priests to accept of any oblation or sacrifice from a Gentile (which was done by Eleazar the son of Ananias, the high priest), Josephus says, was one of those things that brought the Romans upon them, *De Bello Jud.* lib. ii. cap. 30. Though these Greeks, if uncircumcised, were not admitted to eat the passover, yet they came to *worship at the feast.* We must thankfully use the privileges we have, though there may be others from which we are shut out.

II. What was the honour they paid him: they desired to be acquainted with him, *v.* 21. Having come to worship at the feast, they desired to make the best use they could of their time, and therefore applied to Philip, desiring that he would put them in a way to get some personal converse with the Lord Jesus. 1. Having a desire to see Christ, they were industrious in the use of proper means. They did not conclude it impossible, because he was so much crowded, to get to speak with him, nor rest in bare wishes, but resolved to try what could be done. Note, Those that would have the knowledge of Christ must seek it. 2. They made their application to Philip, one of his disciples. Some think that they had acquaintance with him formerly, and that they lived near Bethsaida in Galilee of the Gentiles; and then it teaches us that we should improve our acquaintance with good people, for our increase in the knowledge of Christ. It is good to know those who know the Lord. But if these Greeks had been near Galilee it is probable that they would have attended Christ there, where he mostly resided; therefore I think that they applied to him only because they saw him a close follower of Christ, and he was the first they could get to speak with. It was an instance of the veneration they had for Christ that they made an interest with one of his disciples for an opportunity to converse with him, a sign that they looked upon him as some great one, though he appeared mean. Those that would see Jesus by faith now that he is in heaven must apply to his ministers, whom he has appointed for this purpose, to guide poor souls in their enquiries after him. Paul must send for Ananias, and Cornelius for Peter. The bringing of these Greeks to the knowledge of Christ by the means of Philip signified the agency of the apostles, and the use made of their ministry in the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith and the discipling of the nations. 3 Their address to Philip was in short this: *Sir, we would see Jesus.* They gave him a title of respect, as one worthy of honour, because he was in relation to Christ. Their business is, they would *see Jesus;* not only see his face, that they might be able to say, when they came home, they had seen one that was so much talked of (it is probable they had seen him when he appeared publicly); but they would have some free conversation with him, and be taught by him, for which it was no easy thing to find him at leisure, his hands were so full of public work. Now that they were come to worship at the feast, they would see Jesus. Note, In our attendance upon holy ordinances, and particularly the gospel passover, the great desire of our souls should be to see Jesus; to have our acquaintance with him increased, our dependence on him encouraged, our conformity to him carried on; to see him as ours, to keep up communion with him, and derive communications of grace from him; we miss of our end in coming if we do not see Jesus. 4. Here is the report which Philip made of this to his Master, *v.* 22. He tells Andrew, who was of Bethsaida likewise, and was a *senior fellow* in the college of the apostles, contemporary with Peter, and consults him what was to be done, whether he thought the motion would be acceptable or no, because Christ had sometimes said that he was *not sent but to the house of Israel.* They agree that it must be made; but then he would have Andrew go along with him, remembering the favourable acceptance Christ had promised them, in case *two of them should agree touching any thing they should ask,* Matt. xviii. 19. Note, Christ's ministers should be helpful to one another and concur in helping souls to Christ. *Two are better than one.* It should seem that Andrew and Philip brought this message to Christ when he was teaching in public, for we read (*v.* 29) of the *people that stood by;* but he was seldom alone.

III. Christ's acceptance of this honour paid him, signified by what he said to the people hereupon, *v.* 23, &c., where he foretels both the honour which he himself should have in being followed (*v.* 23, 24) and the honour which those should have that followed him, *v.* 25, 26. This was intended for the direction and encouragement of these Greeks, and all others that desired acquaintance with him.

1. He foresees that plentiful harvest, in the conversion of the Gentiles, of which this was as it were the first-fruits, *v.* 23. Christ said to the two disciples who spoke a good word for these Greeks, but doubted whether they should speed or no, *The hour is come when the Son of man shall be glorified,* by the accession of the Gentiles to the church, and in order to that he must be rejected of the Jews. Observe,

(1.) The end designed hereby, and that is the glorifying of the Redeemer: "And is it so? Do the Gentiles begin to enquire after me? Does the morning-star appear to them? and that blessed *day-spring,* which knows its place and time too, does that begin to *take hold of the ends of the earth?* Then the hour is come for the *glorifying of the Son of man.*" This was no surprise to Christ, but a paradox to those about him. Note, [1.] The calling, the effectual calling, of the Gentiles into the church of God greatly redounded to the glory of the Son of man. The multiplying of the redeemed was the magnifying of the Redeemer. [2.] There was a time, a set time, an hour, a certain hour, for the glorifying of the Son of man, which did come at last, when the days of his humiliation were numbered and finished, and he speaks of the approach of it with exultation and triumph: *The hour is come.*

(2.) The strange way in which this end was to be attained, and that was by the death

of Christ, intimated in that similitude (*v.* 24): "*Verily, verily, I say unto you,* you to whom I have spoken of my death and sufferings, *except a corn of wheat* fall not only *to,* but *into, the ground,* and *die,* and be buried and lost, it *abideth alone,* and you never see any more of it; but *if it die* according to the course of nature (otherwise it would be a miracle) it *bringeth forth much fruit,* God giving to every seed its own body." Christ is the corn of wheat, the most valuable and useful grain. Now here is,

[1.] The necessity of Christ's humiliation intimated. He would never have been the living quickening head and root of the church if he had not descended from heaven to this accursed earth and ascended from earth to the accursed tree, and so accomplished our redemption. He must *pour out his soul unto death,* else he cannot *divide a portion with the great,* Isa. liii. 12. He shall have a seed given him, but he must shed his blood to purchase them and purify them, must win them and wear them. It was necessary likewise as a qualification for that glory which he was to have by the accession of multitudes to his church; for if he had not by his sufferings made satisfaction for sin, and so brought in an everlasting righteousness, he would not have been sufficiently provided for the entertainment of those that should come to him, and therefore must *abide alone.*

[2.] The advantage of Christ's humiliation illustrated. He *fell to the ground* in his incarnation, seemed to be buried alive in this earth, so much was his glory veiled; but this was not all: *he died.* This immortal seed submitted to the laws of mortality, he lay in the grave like seed under the clods; but as the seed comes up again green, and fresh, and flourishing, and with a great increase, so one dying Christ gathered to himself thousands of living Christians, and he became their root. The salvation of souls hitherto, and henceforward to the end of time, is all owing to the dying of this *corn of wheat.* Hereby the Father and the Son are glorified, the church is replenished, the mystical body is kept up, and will at length be completed; and, when time shall be no more, the Captain of our salvation, *bringing many sons to glory* by the virtue of his death, and being so made perfect by sufferings, shall be celebrated for ever with the admiring praises of saints and angels, Heb. ii. 10, 13.

2. He foretels and promises an abundant recompence to those who should cordially embrace him and his gospel and interest, and should make it appear that they do so by their faithfulness in suffering for him or in serving him.

(1.) In suffering for him (*v.* 25): *He that loves his life* better than Christ *shall lose it;* but he that hates *his life in this world,* and prefers the favour of God and an interest in Christ before it, shall *keep it unto life eternal.* This doctrine Christ much insisted on, it being the great design of his religion to wean us from this world, by setting before us another world.

[1.] See here the fatal consequences of an inordinate love of life; many a man hugs himself to death, and loses his life by overloving it. He that so loves his animal life as to indulge his appetite, and make *provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,* shall thereby shorten his days, shall lose the life he is so fond of, and another infinitely better. He that is so much in love with the life of the body, and the ornaments and delights of it, as, for fear of exposing it or them, to deny Christ, he shall lose it, that is, lose a real happiness in the other world, while he thinks to secure an imaginary one in this. *Skin for skin* a man may give for his life, and make a good bargain, but he that gives his soul, his God, his heaven, for it, buys life too dear, and is guilty of the folly of him who sold a birth-right for a mess of pottage.

[2.] See also the blessed recompence of a holy contempt of life. He that so hates the life of the body as to venture it for the preserving of the life of his soul shall find both, with unspeakable advantage, in eternal life. Note, *First,* It is required of the disciples of Christ that they hate *their life in this world;* a life in this world supposes a life in the other world, and this is hated when it is loved less than that. Our life in this world includes all the enjoyments of our present state, riches, honours, pleasures, and long life in the possession of them; these we must hate, that is, despise them as vain and insufficient to make us happy, dread the temptations that are in them, and cheerfully part with them whenever they come in competition with the service of Christ, Acts xx. 24; xxi. 13; Rev. xii. 11. See here much of the *power of godliness*—that it conquers the strongest natural affections; and much of the *mystery of godliness*—that it is the greatest wisdom, and yet makes men hate their own lives. *Secondly,* Those who, in love to Christ, hate their own lives in this world, shall be abundantly recompensed in the resurrection of the just. *He that hateth his life shall keep it;* he puts it into the hands of one that will *keep it to life eternal,* and restore it with as great an improvement as the heavenly life can make of the earthly one.

(2.) In serving him (*v.* 26): *If any man* profess *to serve me,* let him *follow me,* as a servant follows his master; and *where I am,* ἐκεῖ καὶ ὁ διάκονος ὁ ἐμὸς ἔσται—there *let my servant be;* so some read it, as part of the duty, there let him be, to attend upon me; we read it as part of the promise, *there shall he be* in happiness with me. And, lest this should seem a small matter, he adds, *If any man serve me, him will my Father honour;* and that is enough, more than enough. The Greeks desired to see Jesus (*v.* 21), but Christ lets them know that it was not enough to see him, they must *serve him.* He did

not come into the world, to be a show for us to gaze at, but a king to be ruled by. And he says this for the encouragement of those who enquired after him to become his servants. In taking servants it is usual to fix both the work and the wages; Christ does both here.

[1.] Here is the work which Christ expects from his servants; and it is very easy and reasonable, and such as becomes them.

First, Let them attend their Master's movements: *If any man serve me, let him follow me.* Christians must follow Christ, follow his methods and prescriptions, *do the things that he says*, follow his example and pattern, *walk as he also walked*, follow his conduct by his providence and Spirit. We must go whither he leads us, and in the way he leads us; must follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes before us. "If any man serve me, if he put himself into that relation to me, let him apply himself to the business of my service, and be always ready at my call." Or, "If any man do indeed serve me, let him make an open and public profession of his relation to me, by following me, as the servant owns his Master by following him in the streets."

Secondly, Let them attend their Master's repose: *Where I am, there let my servant be*, to wait upon me. Christ is where his church is, in the assemblies of his saints, where his ordinances are administered; and *there let his servants be*, to present themselves before him, and receive instructions from him. Or, "Where I am to be in heaven, whither I am now going, there let the thoughts and affections of my servants be, there let their conversation be, *where Christ sitteth.*" Col. iii. 1, 2.

[2.] Here are the wages which Christ promises to his servants; and they are very rich and noble.

First, They shall be happy with him: *Where I am, there shall also my servant be.* To be with him, when he was here in poverty and disgrace, would seem but poor preferment, and therefore, doubtless, he means being with him in paradise, sitting with him at his table above, on his throne there; it is the happiness of heaven to be with Christ there, *ch.* xvii. 24. Christ speaks of heaven's happiness as if he were already in it: Where *I am;* because he was sure of it, and near to it, and it was still *upon his heart*, and *in his eye.* And the same joy and glory which he thought recompence enough for all his services and sufferings are proposed to his servants as the recompence of theirs. Those that follow him in the way shall be with him in the end.

Secondly, They shall be honoured by his Father; he will make them amends for all their pains and loss, by conferring an honour upon them, such as becomes a great God to give, but far beyond what such worthless worms of the earth could expect to receive. The rewarder is God himself, who takes the services done to the Lord Jesus as done to himself. The reward is honour, true lasting honour, the highest honour; it is the honour that comes from God. It is said (Prov. xxvii. 18), *He that waits on his master* (humbly and diligently) *shall be honoured.* Those that wait on Christ God will put honour upon, such as will be taken notice of another day, though now under a veil. Those that serve Christ must humble themselves, and are commonly vilified by the world, in recompence of both which they shall be exalted in due time.

Thus far Christ's discourse has reference to those Greeks who desired to *see him*, encouraging them to serve him. What became of those Greeks we are not told, but are willing to hope that those who thus asked the way to heaven, with their faces thitherward, found it, and walked in it.

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. 28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again. 29 The people therefore, that stood by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. 30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. 31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. 33 This he said, signifying what death he should die. 34 The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? 35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. 36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

Honour is here done to Christ by his Father in a voice from heaven, occasioned by the following part of his discourse, and which gave occasion to a further conference with the people. In these verses we have,

I. Christ's address to his Father, upon occasion of the trouble which seized his spirit at this time: *Now is my soul troubled, v.* 27. A strange word to come from Christ's mouth, and at this time surprising, for it comes in the midst of divers pleasing prospects, in which, one would think, he should have said, Now is my soul *pleased.* Note, Trouble of soul sometimes follows after great enlargements of spirit. In this world of mixture and change we must expect damps upon our joy, and the highest degree of comfort to be the next degree to trouble. When Paul had been in the third heavens, he had a *thorn in the flesh.* Observe,

1. Christ's dread of his approaching sufferings: *Now is my soul troubled.* Now the black and dismal scene began, now were the first throes of the travail of his soul, now his agony began, his soul *began to be exceedingly sorrowful.* Note, (1.) The sin of our soul was the trouble of Christ's soul, when he undertook to redeem and save us, and to make his soul an offering for our sin. (2.) The trouble of his soul was designed to ease the trouble of our souls; for, after this, he said to his disciples (*ch.* xiv. 1), "*Let not your hearts be troubled;* why should yours be troubled and mine too?" Our Lord Jesus went on cheerfully in his work, in prospect of the joy set before him, and yet submitted to a trouble of soul. Holy mourning is consistent with spiritual joy, and the way to eternal joy. Christ was *now* troubled, now in sorrow, now in fear, now for a season; but it would not be so always, it would not be so long. The same is the comfort of Christians in their troubles; they are but *for a moment,* and will be turned into joy.

2. The strait he seems to be in hereupon, intimated in those words, *And what shall I say?* This does not imply his consulting with any other, as if he needed advice, but considering with himself what was fit to be said now. When our souls are troubled we must take heed of speaking unadvisedly, but debate with ourselves what we shall say. Christ speaks like one at a loss, as if what he should choose he wot not. There was a struggle between the work he had taken upon him, which required sufferings, and the nature he had taken upon him, which dreaded them; between these two he here pauses with, *What shall I say?* He looked, and there was *none to help,* which put him to a stand. Calvin observes this as a great instance of Christ's humiliation, that he should speak thus like one at a loss. *Quo se magis exinanivit gloriæ Dominus, eo luculentius habemus erga nos amoris specimen—The more entirely the Lord of glory emptied himself, the brighter is the proof of the love he bore us.* Thus he was *in all points tempted like as we are,* to encourage us, when we know not what to do, to direct our eyes to him.

3. His prayer to God in this strait: *Father, save me from this hour,* ἐκ τῆς ὥρας ταύτης—*out of this hour,* praying, not so much that it might not come as that he might be brought through it. *Save me from this hour;* this was the language of innocent nature, and its feelings poured forth in prayer. Note, It is the duty and interest of troubled souls to have recourse to God by faithful and fervent prayer, and in prayer to eye him as a Father. Christ was voluntary in his sufferings, and yet prayed to be saved from them. Note, Prayer against a trouble may very well consist with patience under it and submission to the will of God in it. Observe, He calls his suffering *this hour,* meaning the expected events of the time now at hand. Hereby he intimates that the time of his suffering was, (1.) A set time, set to an hour, and he knew it. It was said twice before that his hour was not yet come, but it was now so near that he might say it was come. (2.) A short time. An hour is soon over, so were Christ's sufferings; he could see through them to the *joy set before him.*

4. His acquiescence in his Father's will, notwithstanding. He presently corrects himself, and, as it were, recals what he had said: *But for this cause came I to this hour.* Innocent nature got the first word, but divine wisdom and love got the last. Note, those who would proceed regularly must go upon second thoughts. The complainant speaks first; but, if we would judge righteously, we must hear the other side. With the second thought he checked himself: *For this cause came I to this hour;* he does not silence himself with this, that he could not avoid it, there was no remedy; but satisfies himself with this, that he would not avoid it, for it was pursuant to his own voluntary engagement, and was to be the crown of his whole undertaking; should he now fly off, this would frustrate all that had been done hitherto. Reference is here had to the divine counsels concerning his sufferings, by virtue of which it behoved him thus to submit and suffer. Note, This should reconcile us to the darkest hours of our lives, that we were all along designed for them; see 1 Thess. iii. 3.

5. His regard to his Father's honour herein. Upon the withdrawing of his former petition, he presents another, which he will abide by: *Father, glorify thy name,* to the same purport with *Father, thy will be done;* for God's will is for his own glory. This expresses more than barely a submission to the will of God; it is a consecration of his sufferings to the glory of God. It was a mediatorial word, and was spoken by him as our surety, who had undertaken to satisfy divine justice for our sin. The wrong which by sin we have done to God is in his glory, his declarative glory; for in nothing else are we capable of doing him injury. We were never able to make him satisfaction for this wrong done him, nor any creature for us; nothing therefore remained but that God should get him

honour upon us in our utter ruin. Here therefore our Lord Jesus interposed, undertook to satisfy God's injured honour, and he did it by his humiliation; he denied himself in, and divested himself of, the honours due to the Son of God incarnate, and submitted to the greatest reproach. Now here he makes a tender of this satisfaction as an equivalent: "*Father, glorify thy name;* let thy justice be honoured upon the sacrifice, not upon the sinner; let the debt be levied upon me, I am solvent, the principal is not." Thus he *restored that which he took not away.*

II. The Father's answer to this address; for he heard him always, and does still. Observe, 1. How this answer was given. By a voice from heaven. The Jews speak much of a *Bath-kōl—the daughter of a voice,* as one of those divers manners by which God in time past spoke to the prophets; but we do not find any instance of his speaking thus to any but to our Lord Jesus; it was an honour reserved for him (Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5), and here, probably, this audible voice was introduced by some visible appearance, either of light or darkness, for both have been used as vehicles of the divine glory. 2. What the answer was. It was an express return to that petition, *Father, glorify thy name: I have glorified it* already, and *I will glorify it yet again.* When we pray as we are taught, *Our Father, hallowed be thy name,* this is a comfort to us, that it is an answered prayer; answered to Christ here, and in him to all true believers. (1.) The name of God had been glorified in the life of Christ, in his doctrine and miracles, and all the examples he gave of holiness and goodness. (2.) It should be further glorified in the death and sufferings of Christ. His wisdom and power, his justice and holiness, his truth and goodness, were greatly glorified; the demands of a broken law were fully answered; the affront done to God's government satisfied for; and God accepted the satisfaction, and declared himself well pleased. What God has done for the glorifying of his own name is an encouragement to us to expect what he will yet further do. He that has secured the interests of his own glory will still secure them.

III. The opinion of the standers-by concerning this voice, *v.* 29. We may hope there were some among them whose minds were so well prepared to receive a divine revelation that they understood what was said and bore record of it. But notice is here taken of the perverse suggestion of the multitude: some of them said that *it thundered;* others, who took notice that there was plainly an articulate intelligible voice, said that certainly *an angel spoke to him.* Now this shows, 1. That it was a real thing, even in the judgment of those that were not at all well affected to him. 2. That they were loth to admit so plain a proof of Christ's divine mission. They would rather say that it was this, or that, or any thing, than that God spoke to him in answer to his prayer; and yet, if it thundered with articulate sounds (as Rev. x. 3, 4), was not that God's voice? Or, if angels spoke to him, are not they God's messengers? But thus *God speaks once, yea twice, and man perceives it not.*

IV. The account which our Saviour himself gives of this voice.

1. Why it was sent (*v.* 30): "It came *not because of me,* not merely for my encouragement and satisfaction" (then it might have been whispered in his ear privately), "*but for your sakes.*" (1.) "That all you who heard it may *believe that the Father hath sent me.*" What is said from heaven concerning our Lord Jesus, and the glorifying of the Father in him, is said for our sakes, that we may be brought to submit to him and rest upon him. (2.) "That you my disciples, who are to follow me in sufferings, may therein be comforted with the same comforts that carry me on." Let this encourage them to part with life itself for his sake, if they be called to it, that it will redound to the honour of God. Note, The promises and supports granted to our Lord Jesus in his sufferings were intended for our sakes. *For our sakes* he *sanctified himself,* and *comforted himself.*

2. What was the meaning of it. He that lay in the Father's bosom knew his voice, and what was the meaning of it; and two things God intended when he said that he would *glorify his own name:*—

(1.) That by the death of Christ Satan should be conquered (*v.* 31): *Now is the judgment.* He speaks with a divine exultation and triumph. "Now the year of my redeemed is come, and the time prefixed for breaking the serpent's head, and giving a total rent to the powers of darkness; now for that glorious achievement: *now, now,* that great work is to be done which has been so long thought of in the divine counsels, so long talked of in the written word, which has been so much the hope of saints and the dread of devils." The matter of the triumph is, [1.] That *now is the judgment of the world;* κρίσις, take it as a medical term: "Now is the *crisis* of this world." The sick and diseased world is now upon the turning point; this is the critical day upon which the trembling scale will turn for life or death, to all mankind; all that are not recovered by this will be left helpless and hopeless. Or, rather, it is a law term, as we take it: "Now, judgment is entered, in order to the taking out of execution against the prince of this world." Note, The death of Christ was the *judgment of this world. First,* It is a judgment of discovery and distinction—*judicium discretionis;* so Austin. Now is the trial of this world, for men shall have their character according as the cross of Christ is to them; to some it is foolishness and a stumbling-block, to others it is the wisdom and power of God; of which there

was a figure in the two thieves that were crucified with him. By this men are judged, what they think of the death of Christ. *Secondly,* It is a judgment of favour and absolution to the chosen ones that are in the world. Christ upon the cross interposed between a righteous God and a guilty world as a sacrifice for sin and a surety for sinners, so that when he was judged, and *iniquity laid upon him,* and he was wounded for our transgressions, it was as it were the judgment of this world, for an everlasting righteousness was thereby brought in, not for Jews only, but the whole world, 1 John, ii. 1, 2; Dan. ix. 24. *Thirdly,* It is a judgment of condemnation given against the powers of darkness; see *ch.* xvi. 11. Judgment is put for vindication and deliverance, the asserting of an invaded right. At the death of Christ there was a famous trial between Christ and Satan, the serpent and the promised seed; the trial was for the world, and the lordship of it; the devil had long borne sway among the children of men, time out of mind; he now pleads prescription, grounding his claim also upon the forfeiture incurred by sin. We find him willing to have come to a composition (Luke iv. 6, 7); he would have given the kingdoms of this world to Christ, provided he would hold them by, from, and under him. But Christ would try it out with him; by dying he takes off the forfeiture to divine justice, and then fairly disputes the title, and recovers it in the court of heaven. Satan's dominion is declared to be a usurpation, and the world adjudged to the Lord Jesus as his right, Ps. ii. 6, 8. The judgment of this world is, that it belongs to Christ, and not to Satan; to Christ therefore let us all *attorn* tenants. [2.] That *now is the prince of this world cast out. First,* It is the devil that is here called the *prince of this world,* because he rules over the men of the world by the things of the world; he is the *ruler of the darkness of this world,* that is, of this dark world, of those in it that *walk in darkness,* 2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. vi. 12. *Secondly,* He is said to be *cast out,* to be *now* cast out; for, whatever had been done hitherto towards the weakening of the devil's kingdom was done in the virtue of a Christ to come, and therefore is said to be done *now.* Christ, reconciling the world to God by the merit of his death, broke the power of death, and cast out Satan as a destroyer; Christ, reducing the world to God by the doctrine of his cross, broke the power of sin, and cast out Satan as a deceiver. The bruising of his heel was the breaking of the serpent's head, Gen. iii. 15. When his oracles were silenced, his temples forsaken, his idols famished, and the kingdoms of the world became Christ's kingdoms, then was the *prince of the world cast out,* as appears by comparing this with John's vision (Rev. xii. 8—11), where it is said to be done by the *blood of the Lamb.* Christ's frequent casting of devils out of the bodies of people was an indication of the great design of his whole undertaking. Observe, With what assurance Christ here speaks of the victory over Satan; it is as good as done, and even when he yields to death he triumphs over it.

(2.) That by the death of Christ souls should be converted, and this would be the casting out of Satan (*v.* 32): *If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me.* Here observe two things:—

[1.] The great design of our Lord Jesus, which was to *draw all men to him,* not the Jews only, who had been long in profession a people *near to God,* but the Gentiles also, who had been *afar off;* for he was to be the *desire of all nations* (Hag. ii. 7), and *to him must the gathering of the people be.* That which his enemies dreaded was that the world would go after him; and he would draw them to him, notwithstanding their opposition. Observe here how Christ himself is all in all in the conversion of a soul. *First,* It is Christ that draws: I *will draw.* It is sometimes ascribed to the Father (*ch.* vi. 44), but here to the Son, who is the *arm of the Lord.* He does not drive by force, but draws with the *cords of a man* (Hos. xi. 4; Jer. xxxi. 3), draws as the loadstone; the soul is *made willing,* but it is in a *day of power. Secondly,* It is to Christ that we are drawn: "I will draw them to me as the centre of their unity." The soul that was at a distance from Christ is brought into an acquaintance with him, he that was shy and distrustful of him is brought to love him and trust in him,—drawn up to his terms, into his arms. Christ was now going to heaven, and he would draw men's hearts to him thither.

[2.] The strange method he took to accomplish his design by *being lifted up from the earth.* What he meant by this, to prevent mistake, we are told (*v.* 33): *This he spoke signifying by what death he should die,* the death of the cross, though they had designed and attempted to stone him to death. He that was crucified was first nailed to the cross, and then lifted up upon it. He was *lifted up as a spectacle to the world;* lifted up between heaven and earth, as unworthy of either; yet the word here used signifies an honourable advancement, ἐὰν ὑψωθῶ—*If I be exalted;* he reckoned his sufferings his honour. Whatever death we die, if we die in Christ we shall be lifted up out of this dungeon, this den of lions, into the regions of light and love. We should learn of our Master to speak of dying with a holy pleasantness, and to say, "We shall then be lifted up." Now Christ's drawing all men to him followed his being *lifted up from the earth. First,* It followed after it in time. The great increase of the church was after the death of Christ; while Christ lived, we read of thousands at a sermon miraculously fed, but after his death we read of thousands

at a sermon added to the church Israel began to multiply in Egypt after the death of Joseph. *Secondly,* It followed upon it as a blessed consequence of it. Note, There is a powerful virtue and efficacy in the death of Christ to draw souls to him. The cross of Christ, though to some a *stumbling-stone,* is to others a *loadstone.* Some make it an allusion to the drawing of fish into a net; the lifting up of Christ was as the spreading of the net (Matt. xiii. 47, 48); or to the setting up of a standard, which draws soldiers together; or, rather, it refers to the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness, which drew all those to it who were stung with fiery serpents, as soon as ever it was known that it was lifted up, and there was healing virtue in it. O what flocking was there to it! So there was to Christ, when salvation through him was preached to all nations; see *ch.* iii. 14, 15. Perhaps it has some reference to the posture in which Christ was crucified, with his arms stretched out, to invite all to him, and embrace all that come. Those that put Christ to that ignominious death thought thereby to drive all men from him; but the devil was outshot in his own bow. *Out of the eater came forth meat.*

V. The people's exception against what he said, and their cavil at it, *v.* 34. Though they had heard the voice from heaven, and the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, yet they object, and pick quarrels with him. Christ had called himself the *Son of man* (*v.* 23), which they knew to be one of the titles of the Messiah, Dan. vii. 13. He had also said that the *Son of man must be lifted up,* which they understood of his dying, and probably he explained himself so, and some think he repeated what he said to Nicodemus (*ch.* iii. 14), *So must the Son of man be lifted up.* Now against this,

1. They alleged those scriptures of the Old Testament which speak of the perpetuity of the Messiah, that he should be so far from being cut off in the midst of his days that he should be a *priest for ever* (Ps. cx. 4), and a king *for ever* (Ps. lxxxix. 29, &c.), that he should have *length of days for ever and ever,* and *his years as many generations* (Ps. xxi. 4; lxi. 6), from all which they inferred that the Messiah should not die. Thus great knowledge in the letter of the scripture, if the heart be unsanctified, is capable of being abused to serve the cause of infidelity, and to fight against Christianity with its own weapons. Their perverseness in opposing this to what Jesus had said will appear if we consider, (1.) That, when they vouched the scripture to prove that the Messiah *abideth for ever,* they took no notice of those texts which speak of the Messiah's death and sufferings: they had heard out of the law that *Messiah abideth for ever;* and had they never heard out of the law that Messiah should *be cut off* (Dan. ix. 26), and that he should *pour out his soul unto death* (Isa. liii. 12), and particularly that his *hands and feet* should be pierced? Why then do they make so strange of the *lifting up of the Son of man?* Note, We often run into great mistakes, and then defend them with scripture arguments, by putting those things asunder which God in his word has put together, and opposing one truth under pretence of supporting another. We have heard out of the gospel that which exalts free grace, we have heard also that which enjoins duty, and we must cordially embrace both, and not separate them, nor set them at variance. (2.) That, when they opposed what Christ said concerning the sufferings of the Son of man, they took no notice of what he had said concerning his glory and exaltation. They had heard out of the law that *Christ abideth for ever;* and had they not heard our Lord Jesus say that he should be glorified, that he should bring forth much fruit, and draw all men to him? Had he not just now promised immortal honours to his followers, which supposed his abiding for ever? But this they overlooked. Thus unfair disputants oppose some parts of the opinion of an adversary, to which, if they would but take it entire, they could not but subscribe; and in the doctrine of Christ there are paradoxes, which to men of corrupt minds are stones of stumbling—as Christ *crucified,* and yet *glorified; lifted up from the earth,* and yet *drawing all men to him.*

2. They asked hereupon, *Who is this Son of man?* This they asked, not with a desire to be instructed, but tauntingly and insultingly, as if now they had baffled him, and run him down. "Thou sayest, *The Son of man must die;* we have proved the Messiah must not, and where is then thy Messiahship? This Son of man, as thou callest thyself, cannot be the Messiah, thou must therefore think of something else to pretend to." Now that which prejudiced them against Christ was his meanness and poverty; they would rather have no Christ than a suffering one.

VI. What Christ said to this exception, or rather what he said *upon* it. The objection was a perfect cavil; they might, if they pleased, answer it themselves: man dies, and yet is immortal, and abideth for ever, so the *Son of man.* Therefore, instead of answering these fools according to their folly, he gives them a serious caution to take heed of trifling away the day of their opportunities in such vain and fruitless cavils as these (*v.* 35, 36): "*Yet a little while,* and but a little while, *is the light with you;* therefore be wise for yourselves, and *walk while you have the light.*"

1. In general, we may observe here, (1.) The concern Christ has for the souls of men, and his desire of their welfare. With what tenderness does he here admonish those to look well to themselves who were contriving

ill against him! Even when he *endured the contradiction of sinners*, he sought their conversion. See Prov. xxix. 10. (2.) The method he takes with these objectors, *with meekness instructing those that opposed themselves*, 2 Tim. ii. 25. Were but men's consciences awakened with a due concern about their everlasting state, and did they consider how little time they have to spend, and none to spare, they would not waste precious thoughts and time in trifling cavils.

2. Particularly we have here,

(1.) The advantage they enjoyed in having Christ and his gospel among them, with the shortness and uncertainty of their enjoyment of it: *Yet a little while is the light with you.* Christ is this light; and some of the ancients suggest that, in calling himself the light, he gives a tacit answer to their objection. His dying upon the cross was as consistent with his *abiding for ever* as the setting of the sun every night is with his perpetuity. The duration of Christ's kingdom is compared to that of the sun and moon, Ps. lxxii. 17; lxxxix. 36, 37. The ordinances of heaven are unchangeably fixed, and yet the sun and moon set and are eclipsed; so Christ the Sun of righteousness abides for ever, and yet was eclipsed by his sufferings, and was but a little while within our horizon. Now, [1.] The Jews at this time had the *light with them;* they had Christ's bodily presence, heard his preaching, saw his miracles. The scripture is to us a light shining in a dark place. [2.] It was to be but a little while with them; Christ would shortly leave them, their visible church state would soon after be dissolved and the kingdom of God taken from them, and blindness and hardness would happen unto Israel. Note, It is good for us all to consider what a little while we are to have the light with us. Time is short, and perhaps opportunity not so long. The candlestick may be removed; at least, we must be removed shortly. Yet a little while is the light of life with us; yet a little while is the light of the gospel with us, the day of grace, the means of grace, the Spirit of grace, yet a very little while.

(2.) The warning given them to make the best of this privilege while they enjoyed it, because of the danger they were in of losing it: *Walk while you have the light;* as travellers who make the best of their way forward, that they may not be benighted in their journey, because travelling in the night is uncomfortable and unsafe. "Come," say they, "let us mend our pace, and get forward, while we have day-light." Thus wise should we be for our souls who are journeying towards eternity. Note, [1.] It is our business to walk, to press forward towards heaven, and to get nearer to it by being made fitter for it. Our life is but a day, and we have a day's journey to go. [2.] The best time of walking is while we have the light. The day is the proper season for work, as the night is for rest. The proper time for getting grace is when we have the word of grace preached to us, and the Spirit of grace striving with us, and therefore then is the time to be busy. [3.] We are highly concerned thus to improve our opportunities, for fear lest our day be finished before we have finished our day's work and our day's journey: "*Lest darkness come upon you*, lest you lose your opportunities, and can neither recover them nor despatch the business you have to do without them." Then *darkness* comes, that is, such an utter incapacity to make sure the great salvation as renders the state of the careless sinner quite deplorable; so that, if his work be undone then, it is likely to be undone for ever.

(3.) The sad condition of those who have sinned away the gospel, and are come to the period of their day of grace. *They walk in darkness*, and know neither *where* they go, nor *whither* they go; neither the way they are walking in, nor the end they are walking towards. He that is destitute of the light of the gospel, and is not acquainted with its discoveries and directions, wanders endlessly in mistakes and errors, and a thousand crooked paths, and is not aware of it. Set aside the instructions of the Christian doctrine, and we know little of the difference between good and evil. He is going to destruction, and knows not his danger, for he is either sleeping or dancing at the pit's brink.

(4.) The great duty and interest of every one of us inferred from all this (*v.* 36): *While you have light, believe in the light.* The Jews had now Christ's presence with them, let them improve it; afterwards they had the first offers of the gospel made to them by the apostles wherever they came; now this is an admonition to them not to out-stand their market, but to accept the offer when it was made to them: the same Christ saith to all who enjoy the gospel. Note, [1.] It is the duty of every one of us *to believe in the gospel light*, to receive it as a divine light, to subscribe to the truths it discovers, for it is a light to our eyes, and to follow its guidance, for it is a light to our feet. Christ is the light, and we must believe in him as he is revealed to us; as a true light that will not deceive us, a sure light that will not misguide us. [2.] We are concerned to do this while we have the light, to lay hold on Christ while we have the gospel to show us the way to him and direct us in that way. [3.] Those that believe in the light *shall be the children of light;* they shall be owned as *Christians*, who are called *children of light* (Luke xvi. 8; Eph. v. 8) and of the day, 1 Thess. v. 5. Those that have God for their Father are children of light, for God is light; they are born from above, and heirs of heaven, and children of light, for heaven is light.

VII. Christ's retiring from them, hereupon: *These things spoke Jesus*, and said no more at this time, but left this to their con-

sideration, *and departed, and did hide himself from them.* And this he did, 1. For their conviction and awakening. If they will not regard what he hath said, he will have nothing more to say to them. They are joined to their infidelity, as Ephraim to idols; *let them alone.* Note, Christ justly removes the means of grace from those that quarrel with him, and *hides his face* from *a froward generation,* Deut. xxxii. 20. 2. For his own preservation. He hid himself from their rage and fury, retreating, it is probable, to Bethany, where he lodged. By this it appears that what he said irritated and exasperated them, and they were made worse by that which should have made them better.

37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

We have here the honour done to our Lord Jesus by the Old-Testament prophets, who foretold and lamented the infidelity of the many that believed not on him. It was indeed a dishonour and grief to Christ that his doctrine met with so little acceptance and so much opposition; but *this* takes off the wonder and reproach, makes the offence of it to cease, and made it no disappointment to Christ, that herein the scriptures were fulfilled. Two things are here said concerning this untractable people, and both were foretold by the evangelical prophet Isaiah, that they *did not* believe, and that they *could not* believe.

I. They did not believe (*v.* 37): *Though he had done so many miracles before them,* which, one would think, should have convinced them, yet they believed not, but opposed him. Observe,

1. The abundance of the means of conviction which Christ afforded them: He *did miracles, so many miracles;* τοσαῦτα σημεῖα, signifying both so many and so great. This refers to all the miracles he had wrought formerly; nay, the blind and lame now came to him into the temple, and he healed them, Matt. xxi. 14. His miracles were the great proof of his mission, and on the evidence of them he relied. Two things concerning them he here insists upon:—(1.) The number of them; they were *many,*—various and of divers kinds; numerous and often repeated; and every new miracle confirmed the reality of all that went before. The multitude of his miracles was not only a proof of his unexhausted power, but gave the greater opportunity to examine them; and, if there had been a cheat in them, it was morally impossible but that in some or other of them it would have been discovered; and, being all *miracles of mercy,* the more there were the more good was done. (2.) The notoriety of them. He wrought these miracles *before them,* not at a distance, not in a corner, but before many witnesses, appearing to their own eyes.

2. The inefficacy of these means: *Yet they believed not on him.* They could not gainsay the premises, and yet would not grant the conclusion. Note, The most plentiful and powerful means of conviction will not of themselves work faith in the depraved prejudiced hearts of men. These *saw,* and yet *believed not.*

3. The fulfilling of the scripture in this (*v.*38): *That the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled.* Not that these infidel Jews designed the fulfilling of the scripture (they rather fancied those scriptures which speak of the church's best sons to be fulfilled in themselves), but the event exactly answered the prediction, *so that (ut* for *ita ut)* this saying of Esaias was fulfilled. The more improbable any event is, the more does a divine foresight appear in the prediction of it. One could not have imagined that the kingdom of the Messiah, supported with such pregnant proofs, should have met with so much opposition among the Jews, and therefore their unbelief is called a *marvellous work, and a wonder,* Isa. xxix. 14. Christ himself *marvelled at it,* but it was what Isaiah foretold (Isa. liii. 1), and now it is accomplished. Observe, (1.) The gospel is here called *their report: Who has believed,* τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν—our *hearing,* which we have heard from God, and which you have heard from us. Our report is the report that we bring, like the report of a matter of fact, or the report of a solemn resolution in the senate. (2.) It is foretold that few comparatively of those to whom this report is brought will be persuaded to give credit to it. Many hear it, but few heed it and embrace it: *Who hath believed it?* Here and there one, but none to speak of; not the wise, not the noble; it is to them but a report which wants confirmation. (3.) It is spoken of as a thing to be greatly lamented that so few believe the report of the gospel. *Lord* is here prefixed from the LXX., but is not in the Hebrew, and intimates a sorrowful account brought to God by the messengers of the cold entertainment which they and their report had; as *the servant came, and showed his lord all these things,* Luke xiv. 21. (4.) The reason why men believe not the report of the gospel is because *the arm of*

the Lord is not *revealed* to them, that is, because they do not acquaint themselves with, and submit themselves to, the grace of God; they do not experimentally know the virtue and fellowship of Christ's death and resurrection, in which the arm of the Lord is revealed. They saw Christ's miracles, but did not see the *arm of the Lord revealed in them.*

II. They could not believe, and *therefore* they could not *because Esaias said, He hath blinded their eyes.* This is a hard saying, who can explain it? We are sure that God is infinitely just and merciful, and therefore we cannot think there is in any such an impotency to good, resulting from the counsels of God, as lays them under a fatal necessity of being evil. God damns none by mere sovereignty; yet it is said, *They could not believe.* St. Austin, coming in course to the exposition of these words, expresses himself with a holy fear of entering upon an enquiry into this mystery. *Justa sunt judicia ejus, sed occulta—His judgments are just, but hidden.*

1. They *could not* believe, that is, they *would not;* they were obstinately resolved in their infidelity; thus Chrysostom and Austin incline to understand it; and the former gives divers instances of scripture of the putting of an impotency to signify the invincible refusal of the will, as Gen. xxxvii. 4, *They could not speak peaceably to him.* And *ch.* vii. 7. This is a *moral* impotency, like that of one that is accustomed to do evil, Jer. xiii. 23. But,

2. They could not because Esaias had said, *He hath blinded their eyes.* Here the difficulty increases; it is certain that God is not the author of sin, and yet,

(1.) There is a righteous hand of God sometimes to be acknowledged in the blindness and obstinacy of those who persist in impenitency and unbelief, by which they are justly punished for their former resistance of the divine light and rebellion against the divine law. If God withhold abused grace, and give men over to indulged lusts,—if he permit the evil spirit to do his work on those that resisted the good Spirit,—and if in his providence he lay stumbling-blocks in the way of sinners, which confirm their prejudices, then he *blinds their eyes,* and *hardens their hearts,* and these are spiritual judgments, like the giving up of idolatrous Gentiles to *vile affections,* and degenerate Christians to *strong delusions.* Observe the method of conversion implied here, and the steps taken in it. [1.] Sinners are brought to *see with their eyes,* to discern the reality of divine things and to have some knowledge of them. [2.] To *understand with their heart,* to apply these things to themselves; not only to assent and approve, but to consent and accept. [3.] To *be converted,* and effectually turned from sin to Christ, from the world and the flesh to God, as their felicity and portion. [4.] Then God will *heal* them, will justify and sanctify them; will *pardon* their sins, which are as bleeding wounds, and mortify their corruptions, which are as lurking diseases. Now when God denies his grace nothing of this is done; the alienation of the mind from, and its aversion to, God and the divine life, grow into a rooted and invincible antipathy, and so the case becomes desperate.

(2.) Judicial blindness and hardness are in the word of God threatened against those who wilfully persist in wickedness, and were particularly foretold concerning the Jewish church and nation. Known unto God are all his works, and all ours too. Christ knew before who would betray him, and spoke of it, *ch.* vi. 70. This is a confirmation of the truth of scripture prophecies, and thus even the unbelief of the Jews may help to strengthen our faith. It is also intended for caution to particular persons, to *beware lest that come upon them which was spoken of in the prophets,* Acts xiii. 40.

(3.) What God has foretold will certainly come to pass, and so, by a necessary consequence, in order of arguing, it might be said that *therefore* they *could not believe,* because God by the prophets had foretold they would not; for such is the knowledge of God that he cannot be deceived in what he foresees, and such his truth that he cannot deceive in what he foretels, so that the scripture cannot be broken. Yet be it observed that the prophecy did not name particular persons; so that it might not be said, "Therefore such a one and such a one could not believe, because Esaias had said so and so;" but it pointed at the body of the Jewish nation, which would persist in their infidelity till their cities were wasted without inhabitants, as it follows (Isa. vi. 11, 12); yet still reserving a remnant (*v.* 13, *in it shall be a tenth),* which reserve was sufficient to keep a door of hope open to particular persons; for each one might say, Why may not I be of that remnant?

Lastly, The evangelist, having quoted the prophecy, shows (*v.* 41) that it was intended to look further than the prophet's own days, and that its principal reference was to the days of the Messiah: *These things said Esaias when he saw his glory, and spoke of him.* 1. We read in the prophecy that this was said to Esaias, Isa. vi. 8, 9. But here we are told that it was said *by him* to the purpose. For nothing was said by him as a prophet which was not first said to him; nor was any thing said to him which was not afterwards said by him to those to whom he was sent. See Isa. xxi. 10. 2. The vision which the prophet there had of the *glory of God* is here said to be his *seeing the glory* of Jesus Christ: He *saw his glory.* Jesus Christ therefore is equal in power and glory with the Father, and his praises are equally celebrated. Christ had a glory *before the foundation of the world,* and

Esaias saw this. 3. It is said that the prophet there *spoke of him.* It seems to have been spoken of the prophet himself (for to him the commission and instructions were there given), and yet it is here said to be spoken of Christ, for as all the prophets testified of him so they all typified him. This they spoke of him, that as to many his coming would be not only fruitless, but fatal, a savour of death unto death. It might be objected against his doctrine, If it was from heaven, why did not the Jews believe it? But this is an answer to it; it was not for want of evidence, but because their *heart was made fat,* and their *ears were heavy.* It was spoken of Christ, that he should be glorified in the ruin of an unbelieving multitude, as well as in the salvation of a distinguished remnant.

42 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him,* lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Some honour was done to Christ by these rulers: for they *believed on him,* were convinced that he was sent of God, and received his doctrine as divine; but they did not do him honour enough, for they had not courage to own their faith in him. Many professed more kindness for Christ than really they had; these had more kindness for him than they were willing to profess. See here what a struggle was in these rulers between their convictions and their corruptions.

I. See the power of the word in the convictions that many of them were under, who did not wilfully shut their eyes against the light. They *believed on him* as Nicodemus, received him as a teacher come from God. Note, The truth of the gospel has perhaps a better interest in the consciences of men than we are aware of. Many cannot but approve of that in their hearts which yet outwardly they are shy of. Perhaps these chief rulers were *true* believers, though very weak, and their faith like smoking flax. Note, It may be, there are more good people than we think there are. Elijah thought he was left alone, when God had seven thousand faithful worshippers in Israel. Some are really better than they seem to be. Their faults are known, but their repentance is not; a man's goodness may be concealed by a *culpable* yet pardonable weakness, which he himself truly repents of. The *kingdom of God comes not* in all *with* a like *observation;* nor have all who are good the same faculty of appearing to be so.

II. See the power of the world in the smothering of these convictions. They believed in Christ, but because of the Pharisees, who had it in their power to do them a diskindness, they durst not confess him for fear of being excommunicated. Observe here, 1. Wherein they failed and were defective: They did not *confess* Christ. Note, There is cause to question the sincerity of that faith which is either afraid or ashamed to show itself; for those who believe with the heart ought to *confess with the mouth,* Rom. x. 9. 2. What they feared: being *put out of the synagogue,* which they thought would be a disgrace and damage to them; as if it would do them any harm to be expelled from a synagogue that had made itself a synagogue of Satan, and from which God was departing. 3. What was at the bottom of this fear: *They loved the praise of men,* chose it as a more valuable good, and pursued it as a more desirable end, than the *praise of God;* which was an implicit idolatry, like that (Rom. i. 25) of *worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator.* They set these two in the scale one against the other, and, having weighed them, they proceeded accordingly. (1.) They set the praise of men in one scale, and considered how good it was to give praise to men, and to pay a deference to the opinion of the Pharisees, and receive praise from men, to be commended by the chief priests and applauded by the people as good sons of the church, the Jewish church; and they would not confess Christ, lest they should thereby derogate from the reputation of the Pharisees, and forfeit their own, and thus hinder their own preferment. And, besides, the followers of Christ were put into an *ill name,* and were looked upon with contempt, which those who had been used to honour could not bear. Yet perhaps if they had known one another's minds they would have had more courage; but each one thought that if he should declare himself in favour of Christ he should stand alone, and have nobody to back him; whereas, if any one had had resolution to *break the ice,* he would have had more *seconds* than he thought of. (2.) They put the praise of God in the other scale. They were sensible that by confessing Christ they should both give praise to God, and have praise from God, that he would be pleased with them, and say, *Well done;* but, (3.) They gave the preference to the praise of men, and this turned the scale; sense prevailed above faith, and represented it as more desirable to stand right in the opinion of the Pharisees than to be accepted of God. Note, Love of the praise of men is a very great prejudice to the power and practice of religion and godliness. Many come short of the glory of God by having a regard to the applause of men, and a value for that. Love of the praise of men, as a by-end in that which is good, will make a man a hypocrite when religion is in fashion and credit is to be got by it; and love of the praise of men, as a base principle in that which is evil, will make a man an apostate when religion is in disgrace, and credit is to be lost for it, as here. See Rom. ii. 29.

44 Jesus cried, and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. 45 And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. 46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. 47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. 49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. 50. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

We have here the honour Christ not assumed, but asserted, to himself, in the account he gave of his mission and his errand into the world. Probably this discourse was not at the same time with that before (for then *he departed, v.* 36), but some time after, when he made another public appearance; and, as this evangelist records it, it was Christ's farewell sermon to the Jews, and his last public discourse; all that follows was private with his disciples. Now observe how our Lord Jesus delivered this parting word: he *cried and said. Doth not wisdom cry* (Prov. viii. 1), cry *without?* Prov. i. 20. The raising of his voice and crying intimate, 1. His boldness in speaking. Though they had not courage openly to profess faith in his doctrine, he had courage openly to publish it; if they were ashamed of it, he was not, but set his face as a flint, Isa. l. 7. 2. His earnestness in speaking. He cried as one that was serious and importunate, and in good earnest in what he said, and was willing to impart to them, not only the gospel of God, but *even his own soul.* 3. It denotes his desire that all might take notice of it. This being the last time of the publication of his gospel by himself in person, he makes proclamation, "Whoever will hear me, let them come now." Now what is the conclusion of the whole matter, this closing summary of all Christ's discourses? It is much like that of Moses (Deut. xxx. 15): *See, I have set before you life and death.* So Christ here takes leave of the temple, with a solemn declaration of three things:—

I. The privileges and dignities of those that believe; this gives great encouragement to us to believe in Christ and to profess that faith. It is a thing of such a nature that we need not be shy either of doing it or of owning it; for,

1. By believing in Christ we are brought into an *honourable acquaintance with God* (*v.* 44, 45): *He that believes on me*, and so *sees me, believes on him that sent me*, and so *sees him.* He that believes on Christ, (1.) He does not believe in a mere man, such a one as he seemed to be, and was generally taken to be, but he believes in one that is the Son of God and equal in power and glory with the Father. Or rather, (2.) His faith does not terminate in Christ, but through him it is carried out to the Father, that sent him, to whom, as our end, we come by Christ as our way. The doctrine of Christ is believed and received as the truth of God. The rest of a believing soul is in God through Christ as Mediator; for its resignation to Christ is in order to being presented to God. Christianity is made up, not of philosophy nor politics, but pure divinity. This is illustrated, *v.* 45. He that *sees me* (which is the same with *believing* in him, for faith is the eye of the soul) *sees him that sent me;* in getting an acquaintance with Christ, we come to the knowledge of God. For, [1.] God makes himself known in the face of Christ (2. Cor. iv. 6), who is the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3. [2.] All that have a believing sight of Christ are led by him to the knowledge of God, whom Christ has revealed to us by his word and Spirit. Christ, as God, was the image of his Father's person; but Christ, as Mediator, was his Father's representative in his relation to man, the divine light, law, and love, being communicated to us in and through him; so that in seeing him (that is, in eying him as our Saviour, Prince, and Lord, in the right of redemption), we see and eye the Father as our owner, ruler, and benefactor, in the right of creation: for God is pleased to deal with fallen man by proxy.

2. We are hereby brought into a comfortable enjoyment of ourselves (*v.* 46): *I am come a light into the world, that whoever believes in me*, Jew or Gentile, *should not abide in darkness.* Observe, (1.) The character of Christ: *I am come a light into the world*, to be a light to it. This implies that he had a being, and a being as light, before he came into the world, as the sun is before it rises; the prophets and apostles were made lights to the world, but it was Christ only that came a light into this world, having before been a glorious light in the upper world, *ch.* iii. 19. (2.) The comfort of Christians: They *do not abide in darkness.* [1.] They do not continue in that dark condition in which they were by nature; they are *light in the Lord.* They were without any true comfort, or joy, or hope, but do not continue in that condition; light is sown for them. [2.] Whatever darkness of affliction, disquietment, or fear, they may afterwards be in, provision is

made that they may not long abide in it. [3.] They are delivered from that darkness which is perpetual, and which *abideth for ever*, that utter darkness where there is not the least gleam of light nor hope of it.

II. The peril and danger of those that believe not, which gives fair warning to take heed of persisting in unbelief (*v.* 47, 48): "*If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not*, not I only, or not now, lest I should be looked upon as unfair in being judge in my own cause; yet let not infidelity think therefore to go unpunished, *though I judge him not, there is one that judgeth him.*" So that we have here the doom of unbelief. Observe,

1. Who they are whose unbelief is here condemned: those who *hear Christ's words* and yet *believe them not.* Those shall not be condemned for their infidelity that never had, nor could have, the gospel; every man shall be judged according to the dispensation of light he was under: *Those that have sinned without law shall be judged without law.* But those that have heard, or might have heard, and would not, lie open to this doom.

2. What is the constructive malignity of their unbelief: not receiving Christ's word; it is interpreted (*v.* 48) a *rejecting* of Christ, ὁ ἀθετῶν ἐμέ. It denotes a rejection with scorn and contempt. Where the banner of the gospel is displayed, no neutrality is admitted; every man is either a subject or an enemy.

3. The wonderful patience and forbearance of our Lord Jesus, exercised towards those who slighted him when he was come here upon earth: *I judge him not*, not now. Note, Christ was not quick or hasty to take advantage against those who refused the first offers of his grace, but continued waiting to be gracious. He did not strike those dumb or dead who contradicted him, never made intercession against Israel, as Elias did; though he had authority to judge, he suspended the execution of it, because he had work of another nature to do first, and that was to *save the world.* (1.) To save effectually those that were given him before he came to judge the degenerate body of mankind. (2.) To offer salvation to all the world, and thus far to save them that it is their own fault if they be not saved. He was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Now the executing of the power of a judge was not congruous with that undertaking, Acts viii. 33. *In his humiliation his judgment was taken away*, it was suspended for a time.

4. The certain and unavoidable judgment of unbelievers at the great day, the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God: unbelief will certainly be a damning sin. Some think when Christ saith, *I judge no man*, he means that they are *condemned already.* There needs no process, they are *self-judged;* no execution, they are *self-ruined;* judgment goes against them of course, Heb. ii 3. Christ needs not appear against them as their accuser, they are miserable if he do not appear for them as their advocate; however, he tells them plainly when and where they will be reckoned with. (1.) There is *one that judgeth them.* Nothing is more dreadful than abused patience, and grace trampled on; though for awhile *mercy rejoiceth against judgment*, yet there will be *judgment without mercy.* (2.) Their final judgment is reserved to the *last day;* to that day of judgment Christ here binds over all unbelievers, to answer then for all the contempts they have put upon him. Divine justice has *appointed a day*, and adjourns the sentence to that day, as Matt. xxvi. 64. (3.) The word of Christ will judge them then: *The words that I have spoken*, how light soever you have made of them, *the same shall judge* the unbeliever *in the last day;* as the apostles, the preachers of Christ's word, are said to judge, Luke xxii. 30. Christ's words will judge unbelievers two ways:—[1.] As the evidence of their crime, they will convict them. Every word Christ spoke, every sermon, every argument, every kind offer, will be produced as a testimony against those who slighted all he said. [2.] As the rule of their doom, they will condemn them; they shall be judged according to the tenour of that covenant which Christ procured and published. That word of Christ, *He that believes not shall be damned*, will judge all unbelievers to eternal ruin; and there are *many such like words.*

III. A solemn declaration of the authority Christ had to demand our faith, and require us to receive his doctrine upon pain of damnation, *v.* 49, 50, where observe,

1. The commission which our Lord Jesus received from the Father to deliver his doctrine to the world (*v.* 49): *I have not spoken of myself*, as a mere man, much less as a common man; *but the Father gave me a commandment what I should say.* This is the same with what he said *ch.* vii. 16. *My doctrine is*, (1.) *Not mine*, for *I have not spoken of myself.* Christ, as *Son of man*, did not speak that which was of human contrivance or composure; as Son of God, he did not act separately, or by himself alone, but what he said was the result of the counsels of peace; as Mediator, his coming into the world was voluntary, and with his full consent, but not arbitrary, and of his own head. But, (2.) It was his that sent him. God the Father gave him, [1.] His commission. God sent him as his agent and plenipotentiary, to concert matters between him and man, to set a treaty of peace on foot, and to settle the articles. [2.] His instructions, here called a *commandment*, for they were like those given to an ambassador, directing him not only what he may say, but what he must say. The messenger of the covenant was entrusted with an errand which he must deliver. Note, Our Lord Jesus learned obedience himself, before he taught it to us,

though he was a Son. *The Lord God commanded* the first Adam, and he by his disobedience ruined us; he commanded the second Adam, and he by his obedience saved us. God commanded him what he should *say* and what he should *speak*, two words signifying the same thing, to denote that every word was divine. The Old-Testament prophets sometimes spoke of themselves; but Christ spoke by the Spirit at all times. Some make this distinction: He was directed what he should say in his set sermons, and what he should speak in his familiar discourses. Others this: He was directed what he should say in his preaching now, and what he should speak in his judging at the last day; for he had commission and instruction for both.

2. The scope, design, and tendency of this commission: *I know that his commandment is life everlasting, v.* 50. The commission given to Christ had a reference to the everlasting state of the children of men, and was in order to their everlasting life and happiness in that state: the instructions given to Christ as a prophet were to reveal eternal life (1 John v. 11); the power given to Christ as a king was to give eternal life, *ch.* xvii. 2. Thus the command given him was life everlasting. This Christ says he knew: "I know it is so," which intimates how cheerfully and with what assurance Christ pursued his undertaking, knowing very well that he went upon a good errand, and that which would bring forth fruit unto life eternal. It intimates likewise how justly those will perish who reject Christ and his word. Those who disobey Christ despise everlasting life, and renounce it; so that not only Christ's words will judge them, but even their own; so shall their doom be, themselves have decided it; and who can except against it?

3. Christ's exact observance of the commission and instructions given him, and his steady acting in pursuance of them: *Whatsoever I speak*, it is *as the Father said unto me.* Christ was intimately acquainted with the counsels of God, and was faithful in discovering so much of them to the children of men as it was agreed should be discovered, and *kept back nothing that was profitable.* As the faithful witness delivers souls, so did he, and spoke the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Note, (1.) This is a great encouragement to faith; the sayings of Christ, rightly understood, are what we may venture our souls upon. (2.) It is a great example of obedience. Christ said as he was bidden, and so must we, communicated what the Father had said to him, and so must we. See Acts iv. 20. In the midst of all the respect paid to him, this is the honour he values himself upon, that what the Father had said to him that he spoke, and in the manner as he was directed so he spoke. This was his glory, that, as a Son, he was faithful to him that appointed him; and, by an unfeigned belief of every word of Christ, and an entire subjection of soul to it, we must give him the glory due to his name.

CHAP. XIII.

Our Saviour having finished his public discourses, in which he "endured the contradiction of sinners," now applies himself to a private conversation with his friends, in which he designed the consolation of saints. Henceforward we have an account of what passed between him and his disciples, who were to be entrusted with the affairs of his household, when he was gone into a far country; the necessary instructions and comforts he furnished them with. His hour being at hand, he applies himself to set his house in order. In this chapter, I. He washes his disciples' feet, ver. 1—17. II. He foretels who should betray him, ver. 18—30. III. He instructs them in the great doctrine of his own death, and the great duty of brotherly love, ver. 31—35. IV. He foretels Peter's denying him, ver. 36—38.

NOW before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him; 3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; 4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. 12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am. 14 If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your

feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. 16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17 If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them.

It has generally been taken for granted by commentators that Christ's washing his disciples' feet, and the discourse that followed it, were the same night in which he was betrayed, and at the same sitting wherein he ate the passover and instituted the Lord's supper; but whether before the solemnity began, or after it was all over, or between the eating of the passover and the institution of the Lord's supper, they are not agreed. This evangelist, making it his business to gather up those passages which the others had omitted, industriously omits those which the others had recorded, which occasions some difficulty in putting them together. If it was then, we suppose that *Judas went out* (*v.* 30) to get his men ready that were to apprehend the Lord Jesus in the garden. But Dr. Lightfoot is clearly of opinion that this was done and said, even all that is recorded to the end of *ch.* xiv., not at the passover supper, for it is here said (*v.* 1) to be *before the feast of the passover*, but at the supper in Bethany, two days before the passover (of which we read Matt. xxvi. 2—6), at which Mary the second time anointed Christ's head with the remainder of her box of ointment. Or, it might be at some other supper the night before the passover, not as that was in the house of Simon the leper, but in his own lodgings, where he had none but his disciples about him, and could be more free with them.

In these verses we have the story of Christ's washing his disciples' feet; it was an action of a singular nature; no miracle, unless we call it a miracle of humility. Mary had just anointed his head; now, lest his acceptance of this should look like taking state, he presently balances it with this act of abasement. But why would Christ do this? If the disciples' feet needed washing, they could wash them themselves; a wise man will not do a thing that looks odd and unusual, but for very good causes and considerations. We are sure that it was not in a humour or a frolic that this was done; no, the transaction was very solemn, and carried on with a great deal of seriousness; and four reasons are here intimated why Christ did this:—1. That he might testify his love to his disciples, *v.* 1, 2. 2. That he might give an instance of his own voluntary humility and condescension, *v.* 3—5. 3. That he might signify to them spiritual washing, which is referred to in his discourse with Peter, *v.* 6—11. 4. That he might set them an example, *v.* 12—17. And the opening of these four reasons will take in the exposition of the whole story.

I. Christ washed his disciples' feet that he might give a proof of that great love wherewith he loved them; loved them to the end, *v.* 1, 2.

1. It is here laid down as an undoubted truth that our Lord Jesus, *having loved his own that were in the world, loved them to the end*, *v.* 1.

(1.) This is true of the disciples that were his immediate followers, in particular the twelve. These were his own in the world, his family, his school, his bosom-friends Children he had none to call his own, but he adopted them, and took them as his own. He had those that were his own in the other world, but he left them for a time, to look after his own in this world. These he loved, he called them into fellowship with himself, conversed familiarly with them, was always tender of them, and of their comfort and reputation. He allowed them to be very free with him, and bore with their infirmities. He loved them to the end, continued his love to them as long as he lived, and after his resurrection; he never took away his loving kindness. Though there were some persons of quality that espoused his cause, he did not lay aside his old friends, to make room for new ones, but still stuck to his poor fishermen. They were weak and defective in knowledge and grace, dull and forgetful; and yet, though he reproved them often, he never ceased to love them and take care of them.

(2.) It is true of all believers, for these twelve patriarchs were the representatives of all the tribes of God's spiritual Israel. Note, [1.] Our Lord Jesus has a people in the world that are his own,—his own, for they were given him by the Father, he has purchased them, and paid dearly for them, and he has set them apart for himself, —his own, for they have devoted themselves to him as a peculiar people. *His own;* where *his own* were spoken of that *received him not*, it is *τα ἴδια—his own things*, as a man's cattle are his own, which yet he may, when he pleases, alter the property of. But here it is, *τοὺς ἰδιους—his own persons*, as a man's wife and children are his own, to whom he stands in a constant relation. [2.] Christ has a cordial love for his own that are in the world. He *did* love them with a love of goodwill when he gave himself for their redemption. He *does* love them with a love of complacency when he admits them into communion with himself. Though they are *in this world*, a world of darkness and distance, of sin and corruption, yet he loves them. He was now going to his own in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect there; but he seems most concerned for his own on earth, because they most needed his care: the sickly child is most indulged. [3.] Those whom Christ loves *he loves to the end;* he is constant in

his love to his people; he *rests in his love.* He loves with an everlasting love (Jer. xxxi. 3), from everlasting in the counsels of it to everlasting in the consequences of it. Nothing can separate a believer *from the love of Christ;* he loves his own, εἰς τέλος—*unto perfection,* for he will perfect what concerns them, will bring them to that world where love is perfect.

2. Christ manifested his love to them by washing their feet, as that good woman (Luke vii. 38) showed her love to Christ by washing his feet and wiping them. Thus he would show that as his love to them was constant so it was condescending,—that in prosecution of the designs of it he was willing to humble himself,—and that the glories of his exalted state, which he was now entering upon, should be no obstruction at all to the favour he bore to his chosen; and thus he would confirm the promise he had made to all the saints that he would *make them sit down to meat, and would come forth and serve them* (Luke xii. 37), would put honour upon them as great and surprising as for a lord to serve his servants. The disciples had just now betrayed the weakness of their love to him, in grudging the ointment that was poured upon his head (Matt. xxvi. 8), yet he presently gives this proof of his love to them. Our infirmities are foils to Christ's kindnesses, and set them off.

3. He chose this time to do it, a little before his last passover, for two reasons:—

(1.) Because now *he knew that his hour was come,* which he had long expected, *when he should depart out of this world to the Father.* Observe here, [1.] The change that was to pass over our Lord Jesus; he must *depart.* This began at his death, but was completed at his ascension. As Christ himself, so all believers, by virtue of their union with him, when they depart out of the world, are absent from the body, *go to the Father,* are present with the Lord. It is a departure *out of the world,* this unkind, injurious world, this faithless, treacherous world—this world of labour, toil, and temptation—this vale of tears; and it is a going *to the Father,* to the vision of the Father of spirits, and the fruition of him as ours. [2.] The time of this change: *His hour was come.* It is sometimes called his enemies' hour (Luke xxii. 53), the hour of their triumph; sometimes his hour, the hour of his triumph, the hour he had had in his eye all along. The time of his sufferings was fixed to an hour, and the continuance of them but for an hour. [3.] His foresight of it: He *knew that his hour was come;* he knew from the beginning that it would come, and when, but now he knew that it *was come.* We know not when our hour will come, and therefore what we have to do in habitual preparation for it ought never to be undone; but, when we know by the harbingers that our hour is come, we must vigorously apply ourselves to an actual preparation, as our Master did, 2 Pet. iii. 14. Now it was in the immediate foresight of his departure that he *washed his disciples' feet;* that, as his own head was anointed just now *against the day of his burial,* so their feet might be washed against the day of their consecration by the descent of the Holy Ghost fifty days after, as the priests were washed, Lev. viii. 6. When we see our day approaching, we should do what good we can to those we leave behind.

(2.) Because the *devil had now put it into the heart of Judas to betray him, v.* 2. These words in a parenthesis may be considered, [1.] As tracing Judas's treason to its origin; it was a sin of such a nature that it evidently bore the devil's image and superscription. What way of access the devil has to men's hearts, and by what methods he darts in his suggestions, and mingles them undiscerned with those thoughts which are the natives of the heart, we cannot tell. But there are some sins in their own nature so exceedingly sinful, and to which there is so little temptation from the world and the flesh, that it is plain Satan lays the egg of them in a heart disposed to be the nest to hatch them in. For Judas to betray such a master, to betray him so cheaply and upon no provocation, was such downright enmity to God as could not be forged but by Satan himself, who thereby thought to ruin the Redeemer's kingdom, but did in fact ruin his own. [2.] As intimating a reason why Christ now washed his disciples' feet. *First,* Judas being now resolved to betray him, the time of his departure could not be far off; if this matter be determined, it is easy to infer with St. Paul, *I am now ready to be offered.* Note, The more malicious we perceive our enemies to be against us, the more industrious we should be to prepare for the worst that may come. *Secondly,* Judas being now got into the snare, and the devil aiming at Peter and the rest of them (Luke xxii. 31), Christ would fortify his own against him. If the wolf has seized one of the flock, it is time for the shepherd to look well to the rest. Antidotes must be stirring, when the infection is begun. Dr. Lightfoot observes that the disciples had learned of Judas to murmur at the anointing of Christ; compare *ch.* xii. 4, &c. with Matt. xxvi. 8. Now, lest those that had learned that of him should learn worse, he fortifies them by a lesson of humility against his most dangerous assaults. *Thirdly,* Judas, who was now plotting to betray him, was *one of the twelve.* Now Christ would hereby show that he did not design to cast them all off for the faults of one. Though one of their college had a devil, and was a traitor, yet they should fare never the worse for that. Christ loves his church though there are hypocrites in it, and had still a kindness for his disciples though there was a Judas among them and he knew it.

II. Christ washed his disciples' feet that

he might give an instance of his own wonderful humility, and show how lowly and condescending he was, and let all the world know how low he could stoop in love to his own. This is intimated, *v.* 3—5. *Jesus knowing*, and now actually considering, and perhaps discoursing of, his honours as Mediator, and telling his friends that *the Father had given all things into his hand, rises from supper*, and, to the great surprise of the company, who wondered what he was going to do, *washed his disciples' feet.*

1. Here is the rightful advancement of the Lord Jesus. Glorious things are here said of Christ as Mediator.

(1.) *The Father had given all things into his hands;* had given him a propriety in all, and a power over all, as possessor of heaven and earth, in pursuance of the great designs of his undertaking; see Matt. xi. 27. The accommodation and arbitration of all matters in variance between God and man were committed into his hands as the great umpire and referee; and the administration of the kingdom of God among men, in all the branches of it, was committed to him; so that all acts, both of government and judgment, were to pass through his hands; he is *heir of all things.*

(2.) He *came from God.* This implies that he was in the beginning with God, and had a being and glory, not only before he was born into this world, but before the world itself was born; and that when he came into the world he came as God's ambassador, with a commission from him. He came from God as the Son of God, and the sent of God. The Old-Testament prophets were raised up and employed for God, but Christ came directly from him.

(3.) He *went to God*, to be glorified with him with the same glory which he had with God from eternity. That which comes from God shall go to God; those that are born from heaven are bound for heaven. As Christ came from God to be an agent for him on earth, so he went to God to be an agent for us in heaven; and it is a comfort to us to think how welcome he was there: he was brought near to the *Ancient of days*, Dan. vii. 13. And it was said to him, *Sit thou at my right hand*, Ps. cx. 1.

(4.) He *knew* all this; was not like a prince in the cradle, that knows nothing of the honour he is born to, or like Moses, who *wist not that his face shone;* no, he had a full view of all the honours of his exalted state, and yet stooped thus low. But how does this come in here? [1.] As an inducement to him now quickly to leave what lessons and legacies he had to leave to his disciples, because his hour was now come when he must take his leave of them, and be exalted above that familiar converse which he now had with them, *v.* 1. [2.] It may come in as that which supported him under his sufferings, and carried him cheerfully through this sharp encounter. Judas was now betraying him, and he knew it, and knew what would be the consequence of it; yet, knowing also *that he came from God and went to God*, he did not draw back, but went on cheerfully. [3.] It seems to come in as a foil to his condescension, to make it the more admirable. The reasons of divine grace are sometimes represented in scripture as strange and surprising (as Isa. lvii. 17, 18; Hos. ii. 13, 14); so here, that is given as an inducement to Christ to stoop which should rather have been a reason for his taking state; for God's thoughts are not as ours. Compare with this those passages which preface the most signal instances of condescending grace with the displays of divine glory, as Ps. lxviii. 4, 5; Isa. lvii. 15; lxvi. 1, 2.

2. Here is the voluntary abasement of our Lord Jesus notwithstanding this. *Jesus knowing* his own glory as God, and his own authority and power as Mediator, one would think it should follow, *He rises from supper*, lays aside his ordinary garments, calls for robes, bids them keep their distance, and do him homage; but no, quite the contrary, when he considered this he gave the greatest instance of humility. Note, A well-grounded assurance of heaven and happiness, instead of puffing a man up with pride, will make and keep him very humble. Those that would be found conformable to Christ, and partakers of his Spirit, must study to keep their minds low in the midst of the greatest advancements. Now that which Christ humbled himself to was to *wash his disciples' feet.*

(1.) The action itself was mean and servile, and that which servants of the lowest rank were employed in. *Let thine handmaid* (saith Abigail) *be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord;* let me be in the meanest employment, 1 Sam. xxv. 41. If he had washed their hands or faces, it had been great condescension (Elisha poured water on the hands of Elijah, 2 Kings iii. 11); but for Christ to stoop to such a piece of drudgery as this may well excite our admiration. Thus he would teach us to think nothing below us wherein we may be serviceable to God's glory and the good of our brethren.

(2.) The condescension was so much the greater that he did this for his own disciples, who in themselves were of a low and despicable condition, not curious about their bodies; their feet, it is likely, were seldom washed, and therefore very dirty. In relation to him, they were his scholars, his servants, and such as should have washed his feet, whose dependence was upon him, and their expectations from him. Many of great spirits otherwise will do a mean thing to curry favour with their superiors; they rise by stooping, and climb by cringing; but for Christ to do this to *his disciples* could be no act of policy nor complaisance, but pure humility.

(3.) He *rose from supper* to do it. Though we translate it (*v.* 2) *supper being ended*, it

might be better read, *there being a supper made*, or *he being at supper*, for he sat down again (*v.* 12), and we find him dipping a sop (*v.* 26), so that he did it in the midst of his meal, and thereby taught us, [1.] Not to reckon it a disturbance, nor any just cause of uneasiness, to be called from our meal to do God or our brother any real service, esteeming the discharge of our duty *more than our necessary food*, *ch.*.iv. 34. Christ would not leave his preaching to oblige his nearest relations (Mark iii. 33), but would leave his supper to show his love to his disciples. [2.] Not to be over nice about our meat. It would have turned many a squeamish stomach to wash dirty feet at supper-time; but Christ did it, not that we might learn to be rude and slovenly (cleanliness and godliness will do well together), but to teach us not to be curious, not to indulge, but mortify, the delicacy of the appetite, giving good manners their due place, and no more.

(4.) He put himself into the garb of a servant, to do it: he *laid aside* his loose and upper *garments*, that he might apply himself to this service the more expeditely. We must address ourselves to duty as those that are resolved not to take state, but to take pains; we must divest ourselves of every thing that would either feed our pride or hang in our way and hinder us in what we have to do, must *gird up the loins of our mind*, as those that in earnest buckle to business.

(5.) He did it with all the humble ceremony that could be, went through all the parts of the service distinctly, and passed by none of them; he did it as if he had been used thus to serve; did it himself alone, and had none to minister to him in it. He *girded himself with the towel*, as servants throw a napkin on their arm, or put an apron before them; he *poured water into the basin* out of the water-pots that stood by (*ch.* ii. 6), and then *washed their feet;* and, to complete the service, *wiped them*. Some think that he did not wash the feet of them all, but only four or five of them, that being thought sufficient to answer the end; but I see nothing to countenance this conjecture, for in other places where he did make a difference it is taken notice of; and his washing the feet of them *all*, without exception, teaches us a catholic and extensive charity to all Christ's disciples, even the least.

(6.) Nothing appears to the contrary but that he washed the feet of Judas among the rest, for he was present, *v.* 26. It is the character of a *widow indeed* that she had washed the saints' feet (1 Tim. v. 10), and there is some comfort in this; but the blessed Jesus here washed the feet of a sinner, the worst of sinners, the worst to him, who was at this time contriving to betray him.

Many interpreters consider Christ's washing his disciples' feet as a representation of *his whole undertaking*. He knew that he was equal with God, and all things were his; and yet he rose from his table in glory, laid aside his robes of light, girded himself with our nature, took upon him the form of a servant, *came not to be ministered to, but to minister*, poured out his blood, poured out his soul unto death, and thereby prepared a laver to wash us from our sins, Rev. i. 5.

III. Christ washed his disciples' feet that he might signify to them spiritual washing, and the cleansing of the soul from the pollutions of sin. This is plainly intimated in his discourse with Peter upon it, *v.* 6—11, in which we may observe,

1. The surprise Peter was in when he saw his Master go about this mean service (*v.* 6): *Then cometh he to Simon Peter*, with his towel and basin, and bids him put out his feet to be washed. Chrysostom conjectures that he first washed the feet of Judas, who readily admitted the honour, and was pleased to see his Master so disparage himself. It is most probable that when he *went about* this service (which is all that is meant by his *beginning* to wash, *v.* 5) he took Peter first, and that the rest would not have suffered it, if they had not first heard it explained in what passed between Christ and Peter. Whether Christ came first to Peter or no, when he did come to him, Peter was startled at the proposal: *Lord* (saith he) *dost thou wash my feet?* Here is an emphasis to be laid upon the persons, *thou* and *me;* and the placing of the words is observable, σύ μου—*what, thou mine? Tu mihi lavas pedes? Quid est tu? Quid est mihi? Cogitanda sunt potius quam dicenda—Dost thou wash my feet? What is it thou? What to me? These things are rather to be contemplated than uttered.*—Aug. in loc. What *thou*, our Lord and Master, whom we know and believe to be the Son of God, and Saviour and ruler of the world, do this for *me*, a worthless worm of the earth, *a sinful man, O Lord?* Shall those hands wash my feet which with a touch have cleansed lepers, given sight to the blind, and raised the dead? So Theophylact, and from him Dr. Taylor. Very willingly would Peter have taken the basin and towel, and washed his Master's feet, and been proud of the honour, Luke xvii. 7, 8. "This had been natural and regular; for *my Master* to wash my feet is such a solecism as never was; such a paradox as I cannot understand. *Is this the manner of men?*" Note, Christ's condescensions, especially his condescensions to *us*, wherein we find ourselves taken notice of by his grace, are justly the matter of our admiration, *ch.* xiv. 22. *Who am I, Lord God? And what is my father's house?*

2. The immediate satisfaction Christ gave to this question of surprise. This was at least sufficient to silence his objections (*v.* 7): *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* Here are two reasons why Peter must submit to what Christ was doing:—

(1.) Because he was at present in the dark

concerning it, and ought not to oppose what he did not understand, but acquiesce in the will and wisdom of one who could give a good reason for all he said and did. Christ would teach Peter an *implicit obedience:* "*What I do thou knowest not now,* and therefore art no competent judge of it, but must believe it is well done because I do it." Note, Consciousness to ourselves of the darkness we labour under, and our inability to judge of what God does, should make us sparing and modest in our censures of his proceedings; see Heb. xi: 8.

(2.) Because there was something considerable in it, of which he should hereafter know the meaning: "*Thou shalt know hereafter* what need thou hast of being washed, when thou shalt be guilty of the heinous sin of denying me;" so some. "Thou shalt know, when, in the discharge of the office of an apostle, thou wilt be employed in washing off from those under thy charge the sins and defilements of their earthly affections;" so Dr. Hammond. Note, [1.] Our Lord Jesus does many things the meaning of which even his own disciples do not for the present know, but they *shall know afterwards.* What he did when he became man for us and what he did when he became a worm and no man for us, what he did when he lived our life and what he did when he laid it down, could not be understood till afterwards, and then it appeared that *it behoved him,* Heb. ii. 17. Subsequent providences explain preceding ones; and we see afterwards what was the kind tendency of events that seemed most cross; and the way which we thought was *about* proved the *right way.* [2.] Christ's washing his disciples' feet had a significancy in it, which they themselves did not understand till afterwards, when Christ explained it to be a specimen of the laver of regeneration, and till the Spirit was poured out upon them from on high. We must let Christ take his own way, both in ordinances and providences, and we shall find in the issue it was the best way.

3. Peter's peremptory refusal, notwithstanding this, to let Christ wash his feet (*v.* 8): *Thou shalt by no means wash my feet; no, never.* So it is in the original. It is the language of a fixed resolution. Now, (1.) Here was a show of humility and modesty. Peter herein seemed to have, and no doubt he really had, a great respect for his Master, as he had, Luke v. 8. Thus many are beguiled of their reward in a *voluntary humility* (Col. ii. 18, 23), such a self-denial as Christ neither appoints nor accepts; for, (2.) Under this show of humility there was a real contradiction to the will of the Lord Jesus: "I *will wash thy feet,*" saith Christ; "But thou never shalt," saith Peter, "it is not a fitting thing;" so making himself wiser than Christ. It is not humility, but infidelity, to put away the offers of the gospel, as if too rich to be made to us or too good news to be true.

4. Christ's insisting upon his offer, and a good reason given to Peter why he should accept it: *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.* This may be taken, (1.) As a severe caution against disobedience: "*If I wash thee not,* if thou continue refractory, and wilt not comply with thy Master's will in so small a matter, thou shalt not be owned as one of my disciples, but be justly discarded and cashiered for not observing orders." Thus several of the ancients understand it; if Peter will make himself wiser than his Master, and dispute the commands he ought to obey, he does in effect renounce his allegiance, and say, as they did, *What portion have we in David,* in the Son of David? And so shall his doom be, he shall have no part in him. Let him use no more manners than will do him good, for *to obey is better than sacrifice,* 1 Sam. xv. 22. Or, (2.) As a declaration of the necessity of spiritual washing; and so I think it is to be understood: "*If I wash not* thy soul from the pollution of sin, *thou hast no part with me,* no interest in me, no communion with me, no benefit by me." Note, All those, and those only, that are spiritually washed by Christ, have a part in Christ. [1.] To have a part in Christ, or with Christ, has all the happiness of a Christian bound up in it, to be *partakers of Christ* (Heb. iii. 14), to share in those inestimable privileges which result from a union with him and relation to him. It is that *good part* the having of which is the *one thing needful.* [2.] It is necessary to our having a part in Christ that he wash us. All those whom Christ owns and saves he justifies and sanctifies, and both are included in his washing them. We cannot partake of his glory if we partake not of his merit and righteousness, and of his Spirit and grace.

5. Peter's more than submission, his earnest request, to be washed by Christ, *v.* 9. If this be the meaning of it, *Lord, wash not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.* How soon is Peter's mind changed! When the mistake of his understanding was rectified, the corrupt resolution of his will was soon altered. Let us therefore not be peremptory in any resolve (except in our resolve to follow Christ), because we may soon see cause to retract it, but cautious in taking up a purpose we will be tenacious of. Observe,

(1.) How ready Peter is to recede from what he had said: "Lord, what a fool was I to speak such a hasty word!" Now that the washing of him appeared to be an act of Christ's authority and grace he admits it; but disliked it when it seemed only an act of humiliation. Note, [1.] Good men, when they see their error, will not be loth to recant it. [2.] Sooner or later, Christ will bring all to be of his mind.

(2.) How importunate he is for the purifying grace of the Lord Jesus, and the universal influence of it, even upon his hands and head. Note, A divorce from Christ, and an

exclusion from having a part in him, is the most formidable evil in the eyes of all that are enlightened, for the fear of which they will be persuaded to any thing. And for fear of this we should be earnest with God in prayer, that he will wash us, will justify and sanctify us. "Lord, that I may not be cut off from thee, make me fit for thee, by the washing of regeneration. *Lord, wash not my feet only* from the gross pollutions that cleave to them, *but also my hands and my head* from the spots which they have contracted, and the undiscerned filth which proceeds by perspiration from the body itself." Note, Those who truly desire to be sanctified desire to be sanctified throughout, and to have the whole man, with all its parts and powers, purified, 1 Thess. v. 23.

6. Christ's further explication of this sign, as it represented spiritual washing.

(1.) With reference to his disciples that were faithful to him (*v.* 10): *He that is washed* all over in the bath (as was frequently practised in those countries), when he returns to his house, *needeth not save to wash his feet*, his hands and head having been washed, and he having only dirtied his feet in walking home. Peter had gone from one extreme to the other. At first he would not let Christ wash his feet; and now he overlooks what Christ had done for him in his baptism, and what was signified thereby, and cries out to have his hands and head washed. Now Christ directs him into the meaning; he must have his feet washed, but not his hands and head. [1.] See here what is the comfort and privilege of such as are in a justified state; they are washed by Christ, and are *clean every whit*, that is, they are graciously accepted of God, as if they were so; and, though they offend, yet they need not, upon their repentance, be again put into a justified state, for then should they often be baptized. The evidence of a justified state may be clouded, and the comfort of it suspended, when yet the charter of it is not vacated or taken away. Though we have occasion to repent daily, God's gifts and callings are without repentance. The heart may be swept and garnished, and yet still remain the devil's palace; but, if it be washed, it belongs to Christ, and he will not lose it. [2.] See what ought to be the daily care of those who through grace are in a justified state, and that is to wash their feet; to cleanse themselves from the guilt they contract daily through infirmity and inadvertence, by the renewed exercise of repentance, with a believing application of the virtue of Christ's blood. We must also wash our feet by constant watchfulness against every thing that is defiling, for we must cleanse our way, and cleanse our feet *by taking heed thereto*, Ps. cxix. 9. The priests, when they were consecrated, were washed with water; and, though they did not need afterwards to be so washed all over, yet, whenever they went in to minister, they must wash their feet and hands at the laver, on pain of death, Exod. xxx. 19, 20. The provision made for our cleansing should not make us presumptuous, but the more cautious. *I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* From yesterday's pardon, we should fetch an argument against this day's temptation.

(2.) With reflection upon Judas: *And you are clean, but not all, v.* 10, 11. He pronounces his disciples clean, clean *through the word he had spoken to them, ch.* xv. 3. He washed them himself, and then said, *You are clean;* but he excepts Judas: *not all;* they were all baptized, even Judas, yet not all clean; many have the sign that have not the thing signified. Note, [1.] Even among those who are called disciples of Christ, and profess relation to him, there are some who are not clean, Prov. xxx. 12. [2.] The Lord knows those that are his, and those that are not, 2 Tim. ii. 19. The eye of Christ can separate between the precious and the vile, the clean and the unclean. [3.] When those that have called themselves disciples afterwards prove traitors, their apostasy at last is a certain evidence of their hypocrisy all along. [4.] Christ sees it necessary to let his disciples know that they are not all clean; that we may all be jealous over ourselves (*Is it I? Lord, is it I* that am among the clean, yet not clean?) and that, when hypocrites are discovered, it may be no surprise nor stumbling to us.

IV. Christ washed his disciples' feet to set before us an example. This explication he gave of what he had done, when he had done it, *v.* 12—17. Observe,

1. With what solemnity he gave an account of the meaning of what he had done (*v.* 12): *After he had washed their feet*, he said, *Know you what I have done?*

(1.) He adjourned the explication till he had finished the transaction, [1.] To try their submission and implicit obedience. What he did they should not know till afterwards, that they might learn to acquiesce in his will when they could not give a reason for it. [2.] Because it was proper to finish the riddle before he unriddled it. Thus, as to his whole undertaking, when his sufferings were finished, when he had resumed the garments of his exalted state and was ready to sit down again, then he *opened the understandings of his disciples*, and poured out his Spirit, Luke xxiv. 45, 46.

(2.) Before he explained it, he asked them if they could construe it: *Know you what I have done to you?* He put this question to them, not only to make them sensible of their ignorance, and the need they had to be instructed (as Zech. iv. 5, 13, *Knowest thou not what these be? and I said, No, my Lord)*, but to raise their desires and expectations of instruction: "I *would have you know*, and, if you will give attention, I will tell you." Note, It is the will of Christ that sacramental signs should be explained, and that his people

should be acquainted with the meaning of them; otherwise, though ever so significant, to those who know not the thing signified they are insignificant. Hence they are directed to ask, *What mean you by this service?* Exod. xii. 26.

2. Upon what he grounds that which he had to say (*v.* 13): "*You call me Master and Lord*, you give me those titles, in speaking of me, in speaking to me, and *you say well*, for *so I am;* you are in the relation of scholars to me, and I do the part of a master to you." Note, (1.) Jesus Christ is our Master and Lord; he that is our Redeemer and Saviour is, in order to that, our Lord and Master. He is our Master, διδάσκαλος—our teacher and instructor in all necessary truths and rules, as a prophet revealing to us the will of God. He is our Lord, κύριος—our ruler and owner, that has authority over us and propriety in us. (2.) It becomes the disciples of Christ to call him Master and Lord, not in compliment, but in reality; not by constraint, but with delight. Devout Mr. Herbert, when he mentioned the name of Christ, used to add, my Master; and thus expresses himself concerning it in one of his poems:

> How sweetly doth my Master sound, my Master!
> As ambergris leaves a rich scent unto the taster,
> So do these words a sweet content, an oriental fragrancy, my Master.

(3.) Our calling Christ Master and Lord is an obligation upon us to receive and observe the instructions he gives us. Christ would thus pre-engage their obedience to a command that was displeasing to flesh and blood. If Christ be our Master and Lord, be so by our own consent, and we have often called him so, we are bound in honour and honesty to be observant of him.

3. The lesson which he hereby taught: *You also ought to wash one another's feet, v.* 14.

(1.) Some have understood this literally, and have thought these words amount to the institution of a standing ordinance in the church; that Christians should, in a solemn religious manner, *wash one another's feet*, in token of their condescending love to one another. St. Ambrose took it so, and practised it in the church of Milan. St. Austin saith that those Christians who did not do it with their hands, yet (he hoped) did it with their hearts in humility; but he saith, It is much better to do it with the hands also, when there is occasion, as 1 Tim. v. 10. What Christ has done Christians should not disdain to do. Calvin saith that the pope, in the annual observance of this ceremony on Thursday in the passion week, is rather Christ's ape than his follower, for the duty enjoined, in conformity to Christ, was *mutual: Wash one another's feet.* And Jansenius saith, It is done, *Frigidè et dissimiliter—Frigidly, and unlike the primitive model.*

(2.) But doubtless it is to be understood figuratively; it is an instructive sign, but not sacramental, as the eucharist. This was a parable to the eye; and three things our Master hereby designed to teach us:—[1.] A humble condescension. We must learn of our Master to be *lowly in heart* (Matt. xi. 29), and walk with all lowliness; we must think meanly of ourselves and respectfully of our brethren, and deem nothing below us but sin; we must say of that which seems mean, but has a tendency to the glory of God and our brethren's good, as David (2 Sam. vi. 22), *If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile.* Christ had often taught his disciples humility, and they had forgotten the lesson; but now he teaches them in such a way as surely they could never forget. [2.] A condescension to be serviceable. To wash one another's feet is to stoop to the meanest offices of love, for the real good and benefit one of another, as blessed Paul, who, though free from all, made himself *servant of all;* and the blessed Jesus, who *came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.* We must not grudge to take care and pains, and to spend time, and to diminish ourselves for the good of those to whom we are not under any particular obligations, even of our inferiors, and such as are not in a capacity of making us any requital. Washing the feet after travelling contributes both to the decency of the person and to his ease, so that to wash one another's feet is to consult both the credit and the comfort one of another, to do what we can both to advance our brethren's reputation and to make their minds easy. See 1 Cor. x. 24; Heb. vi. 10. The duty is *mutual;* we must both accept help from our brethren and afford help to our brethren. [3.] A serviceableness to the sanctification one of another: *You ought to wash one another's feet*, from the pollutions of sin. Austin takes it in this sense, and many others. We cannot satisfy for one another's sins, this is peculiar to Christ, but we may help to purify one another from sin. We must in the first place wash ourselves; this charity must begin at home (Matt. vii. 5), but it must not end there; we must sorrow for the failings and follies of our brethren, much more for their gross pollutions (1 Cor. v. 2), must wash our brethren's polluted feet in tears. We must faithfully reprove them, and do what we can to bring them to repentance (Gal. vi. 1), and we must admonish them, to prevent their falling into the mire; this is washing their feet.

4. Here is the ratifying and enforcing of this command from the example of what Christ had now done: *If I your Lord and Master have* done it to you, you ought to do it *to one another.* He shows the cogency of this argument in two things:—

(1.) I am *your Master*, and you are my disciples, and therefore you ought to *learn of me* (*v.* 15); for in this, as in other things, *I have given you an example*, that *you should do* to others *as I have done* to you. Observe,

[1.] What a good teacher Christ is. He teaches by example as well as doctrine, and for this end came into this world, and dwelt among us, that he might set us a copy of all those graces and duties which his holy religion teaches; and it is a copy without one false stroke. Hereby he made his own laws more intelligible and honourable. Christ is a commander like Gideon, who said to his soldiers, *Look on me, and do likewise* (Judg. vii. 17); like Abimelech, who said, *What you have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done* (Judg. ix. 48); and like Cæsar, who called his soldiers, not *milites—soldiers,* but *commilitones—fellow-soldiers,* and whose usual word was, not *Ite illuc,* but *Venite huc;* not *Go,* but *Come.* [2.] What good scholars we must be. We must *do as he hath done;* for therefore he gave us a copy, that we should write after it, that we might be as he was in this world (1 John iv. 17), and walk *as he walked,* 1 John ii. 6. Christ's example herein is to be followed by ministers in particular, in whom the graces of humility and holy love should especially appear, and by the exercise thereof they effectually serve the interests of their Master and the ends of their ministry. When Christ sent his apostles abroad as his agents, it was with this charge, that they should not take state upon them, nor carry things with a high hand, but *become all things to all men,* 1 Cor. ix. 22. What I have done to your dirty feet that do you to the polluted souls of sinners; *wash them.* Some who suppose this to have been done at the passover supper think it intimates a rule in admitting communicants to the Lord's-supper, to see that they be first washed and cleansed by reformation and a blameless conversation, and then take them in to *compass God's altar.* But all Christians likewise are here taught to condescend to each other in love, and to do it as Christ did it, unasked, unpaid; we must not be mercenary in the services of love, nor do them with reluctancy.

(2.) I am *your Master,* and you are my disciples, and therefore you cannot think it below you to do that, how mean soever it may seem, which you have seen me do, for (*v.* 16) *the servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent,* though sent with all the pomp and power of an ambassador, *greater than he that sent him.* Christ had urged this (Matt. x. 24, 25) as a reason why they should not think it strange if they suffered as he did; here he urges it as a reason why they should not think it much to humble themselves as he did. What he did not think a disparagement to him, they must not think a disparagement to them. Perhaps the disciples were inwardly disgusted at this precept of washing one another's feet, as inconsistent with the dignity they expected shortly to be preferred to. To obviate such thoughts, Christ reminds them of their place as his servants; they were not better men than their Master, and what was consistent with his dignity was much more consistent with theirs. If he was humble and condescending, it ill became them to be proud and assuming. Note, [1.] We must take good heed to ourselves, lest Christ's gracious condescensions to us, and advancements of us, through the corruption of nature occasion us to entertain high thoughts of ourselves or low thoughts of him. We need to be put in mind of this, that we are not *greater than our Lord.* [2.] Whatever our Master was pleased to condescend to in favour to us, we should much more condescend to in conformity to him. Christ, by humbling himself, has dignified humility, and put an honour upon it, and obliged his followers to think nothing below them but sin. We commonly say to those who disdain to do such or such a thing, As good as you have done it, and been never the worse thought of; and true indeed it is, if our Master has done it. When we see our Master serving, we cannot but see how ill it becomes us to be domineering.

5. Our Saviour closes this part of his discourse with an intimation of the necessity of their obedience to these instructions: *If you know these things;* or, seeing you know them, *happy are you if you do them.* Most people think, Happy are those that rise and rule. Washing one another's feet will never get estates and preferments; but Christ saith, notwithstanding this, Happy are those that stoop and obey. *If you know these things.* This may be understood either as intimating a doubt whether they knew them or no; so strong was their conceit of a temporal kingdom that it was a question whether they could entertain the notion of a duty so contrary to that conceit. Or, as taking it for granted that they did know these things; since they had such excellent precepts given them, recommended by such an excellent pattern, it will be necessary to the completing of their happiness that they practise accordingly. (1.) This is applicable to the commands of Christ in general. Note, Though it is a great advantage to know our duty, yet we shall come short of happiness if we do not do our duty. Knowing is in order to doing; that knowledge therefore is vain and fruitless which is not reduced to practice; nay, it will aggravate the sin and ruin, Luke xii. 47, 48; James iv. 17. It is knowing and doing that will demonstrate us of *Christ's kingdom,* and wise builders. See Ps. ciii. 17, 18. (2.) It is to be applied especially to this command of humility and serviceableness. Nothing is better known, nor more readily acknowledged, than this, that we should be humble; and therefore, though many will own themselves to be passionate and intemperate, few will own themselves to be proud, for it is as inexcusable a sin, and as hateful, as any other; and yet how little is to be seen of true humility, and that mutual subjection and condescension upon

which the law of Christ so much insists! Most know these things so well as to expect that others should do accordingly to them, yield to them, and serve them, but not so well as to do so themselves.

18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. 19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*. 20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. 23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25 He then lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it? 26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped *it*. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. 27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. 28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. 29 For some *of them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. 30 He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

We have here the discovery of Judas's plot to betray his Master. Christ knew it from the beginning; but now first he discovered it to his disciples, who did not expect Christ should be betrayed, though he had often told them so, much less did they suspect that one of them should do it. Now here,

I. Christ gives them a general intimation of it (*v.* 18): *I speak not of you all,* I cannot expect you will all do these things, for *I know whom I have chosen,* and whom I have passed by; but the scripture will be fulfilled (Ps. xli. 9), *He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.* He does not yet speak out, either of the crime or the criminal, but raises their expectations of a further discovery.

1. He intimates to them that they were not all right. He had said (*v.* 10), *You are clean, but not all.* So here, *I speak not of you all.* Note, What is said of the excellencies of Christ's disciples cannot be said of all that are called so. The word of Christ is a distinguishing word, which separates *between cattle and cattle,* and will distinguish thousands into hell who flattered themselves with hopes that they were going to heaven. *I speak not of you all;* you my disciples and followers. Note, There is a mixture of bad with good in the best societies, a Judas among the apostles; it will be so till we come to the blessed society into which shall enter nothing unclean or disguised.

2. That he himself knew who were right, and who were not: *I know whom I have chosen,* who the few are that are chosen among the many that are called with the common call. Note, (1.) Those that are chosen, Christ himself had the choosing of them; he nominated the persons he undertook for. (2.) Those that are chosen are known to Christ, for he never forgets any whom he has once had in his thoughts of love, 2 Tim. ii. 19.

3. That in the treachery of him that proved false to him the scripture was fulfilled, which takes off very much both the surprise and offence of the thing. Christ took one into his family whom he foresaw to be a traitor, and did not by effectual grace prevent his being so, *that the scripture might be fulfilled.* Let it not therefore be a stumbling-block to any; for, though it do not at all lessen Judas's offence, it may lessen our offence at it. The scripture referred to is David's complaint of the treachery of some of his enemies; the Jewish expositors, and ours from them, generally understand it of Ahithophel: Grotius thinks it intimates that the death of Judas would be like that of Ahithophel. But because that psalm speaks of David's sickness, of which we read nothing at the time of Ahithophel's deserting him, it may better be understood of some other friend of his, that proved false to him. This our Saviour applies to Judas. (1.) Judas, as an apostle, was admitted to the highest privilege: he did *eat bread with Christ.* He was familiar with him, and favoured by him, was one of his family, one of those with whom he was intimately conversant. David saith of his treacherous friend, He did eat *of my bread;* but Christ, being poor, had no bread he could properly call his own. He saith, He did *eat bread with me;* such as he had by the kindness of his friends, that ministered to him, his disciples had their share

of, Judas among the rest. Wherever he went, Judas was welcome with him, did not dine among servants, but sat at table with his Master, ate of the same dish, drank of the same cup, and in all respects fared as he fared. He ate miraculous bread with him, when the loaves were multiplied, ate the passover with him. Note, All that eat bread with Christ are not his disciples indeed. See 1 Cor. x. 3—5. (2.) Judas, as an apostate, was guilty of the basest treachery: he *lifted up the heel* against Christ. [1.] He forsook him, turned his back upon him, went out from the society of his disciples, *v.* 30. [2.] He despised him, shook off the dust of his feet against him, in contempt of him and his gospel. Nay, [3.] He became an enemy to him; spurned at him, as wrestlers do at their adversaries, whom they would overthrow. Note, It is no new thing for those that were Christ's seeming friends to prove his real enemies. Those who pretended to magnify him magnify themselves against him, and thereby prove themselves guilty, not only of the basest ingratitude, but the basest treachery and perfidiousness.

II. He gives them a reason why he told them beforehand of the treachery of Judas (*v.* 19): "*Now I tell you before it come,* before Judas has begun to put his wicked plot in execution, *that when it is come to pass you may,* instead of stumbling at it, be confirmed in your *belief that I am he,* he that should come." 1. By his clear and certain foresight of things to come, of which in this, as in other instances, he gave incontestable proof, he proved himself to be the true God, before whom all things are naked and open. Christ foretold that Judas would betray him when there was no ground to suspect such a thing, and so proved himself the eternal Word, which is a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* The prophecies of the New Testament concerning the apostasy of the latter times (which we have, 2 Thess. ii.; 1 Tim. iv., and in the Apocalypse) being evidently accomplished is a proof that those writings were divinely inspired, and confirms our faith in the whole canon of scripture. 2. By this application of the types and prophecies of the Old Testament to himself, he proved himself to be the true Messiah, to whom *all the prophets bore witness.* Thus *it was written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer,* and he suffered just as it was written, Luke xxiv. 25, 26; *ch.* viii. 28.

III. He gives a word of encouragement to his apostles, and all his ministers whom he employs in his service (*v.* 20): *He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me.* The purport of these words is the same with what we have in other scriptures, but it is not easy to make out their coherence here. Christ had told his disciples that they must humble and abase themselves. "Now," saith he, "though there may be those that will despise you for your condescension, yet there will be those that will do you honour, and shall be honoured for so doing." Those who know themselves dignified by Christ's commission may be content to be vilified in the world's opinion. Or, he intended to silence the scruples of those who, because there was a traitor among the apostles, would be shy of receiving any of them; for, if one of them was false to his Master, to whom would any of them be true? *Ex uno disce omnes—They are all alike.* No, as Christ will think never the worse of them for Judas's crime, so he will stand by them, and own them, and will raise up such as shall receive them. Those that had received Judas when he was a preacher, and perhaps were converted and edified by his preaching, were never the worse, nor should reflect upon it with any regret, though he afterwards proved a traitor; for he was one whom Christ sent. We cannot know what men are, much less what they will be, but those who appear to be sent of Christ we must receive, till the contrary appear. Though some, by entertaining strangers, have entertained robbers unawares, yet we must still be hospitable, for thereby some have entertained angels. The abuses put upon our charity, though ordered with ever so much discretion, will neither justify our uncharitableness, nor lose us the reward of our charity. 1. We are here encouraged to receive ministers as *sent of Christ:* "*He that receiveth whomsoever I send,* though weak and poor, and subject to like passions as others (for as the law, so the gospel, *makes men priests that have infirmity),* yet if he deliver my message, and be regularly called and appointed to do so, and as an officer give himself to the word and prayer, he that entertains him shall be owned as a friend of mine." Christ was now leaving the world, but he would leave an order of men to be his agents, to deliver his word, and those who receive *this,* in the light and love of it, receive *him.* To believe the doctrine of Christ, and obey his law, and accept the salvation offered upon the terms proposed; this is receiving those whom Christ sends, and it is *receiving Christ Jesus the Lord* himself. 2. We are here encouraged to receive Christ as sent of God: *He that* thus *receiveth me,* that receiveth Christ in his ministers, receiveth the Father also, for they come upon his errand likewise, baptizing in the name of the Father, as well as of the Son. Or, in general, *He that receiveth me* as his prince and Saviour receiveth *him that sent me* as his portion and felicity. Christ was sent of God, and in embracing his religion we embrace the *only true* religion.

IV. Christ more particularly notifies to them the plot which one of their number was now hatching against him (*v.* 21): *When Jesus had thus said* in general, to prepare them for a more particular discovery, he was *troubled in spirit,* and showed it by some gesture or sign, and *he testified,* he solemnly declared it *(cum animo testandi—with the so-*

lemnity of a witness on oath), "One of you shall betray me; one of you my apostles and constant followers." None indeed could be said to *betray* him but those in whom he reposed a confidence, and who were the witnesses of his retirements. This did not determine Judas to the sin by any fatal necessity; for, though the event did follow according to the prediction, yet not from the prediction. Christ is not the author of sin; yet as to this heinous sin of Judas, 1. Christ foresaw it; for even that which is secret and future, and hidden from the eyes of all living, naked and open before the eyes of Christ. He *knows what is in men* better than they do themselves (2 Kings viii. 12), and therefore sees what will be done by them. *I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously*, Isa. xlviii. 8. 2. He foretold it, not only for the sake of the rest of the disciples, but for the sake of Judas himself, that he might take warning, and recover himself out of the snare of the devil. Traitors proceed not in their plots when they find they are discovered; surely Judas, when he finds that his Master knows his design, will retreat in time; if not, it will aggravate his condemnation. 3. He spoke of it with a manifest concern; he was *troubled in spirit* when he mentioned it. He had often spoken of his own sufferings and death, without any such trouble of spirit as he here manifested when he spoke of the ingratitude and treachery of Judas. This touched him in a tender part. Note, The falls and miscarriages of the disciples of Christ are a great trouble of spirit to their Master; the sins of Christians are the grief of Christ. "What! *One of you betray me?* You that have received from me such distinguishing favours; you that I had reason to think would be firm to me, that have professed such a respect for me; what iniquity have you found in me that one of you should betray me?" This went to his heart, as the undutifulness of children grieves those who have *nourished and brought them up*, Isa. i. 2. See Ps. xcv. 10; Isa. lxiii. 10.

V. The disciples quickly take the alarm. They knew their Master would neither deceive them nor jest with them; and therefore *looked one upon another*, with a manifest concern, *doubting of whom he spoke.* 1. By looking one upon another they evinced the trouble they were in upon this notice given them; it struck such a horror upon them that they knew not well which way to look, nor what to say. They saw their Master troubled, and therefore they were troubled. This was at a feast where they were cheerfully entertained; but hence we must be taught to rejoice with trembling, and as though we rejoiced not. When David wept for his son's rebellion, all his followers wept with him (2 Sam. xv. 30); so Christ's disciples here. Note, That which grieves Christ is, and should be, a grief to all that are his, particularly the scandalous miscarriages of those that are called by his name: *Who is offended, and I burn not?* 2. Hereby they endeavoured to *discover* the traitor. They looked wistfully in one another's face, to see who blushed, or, by some disorder in the countenance, manifested guilt in the heart, upon this notice; but, while those who were faithful had their consciences so clear that they could *lift up their faces without spot*, he that was false had his conscience so seared that he was not ashamed, neither could he blush, and so no discovery could be made in this way. Christ thus perplexed his disciples for a time, and put them into confusion, that he might *humble them, and prove them*, might excite in them a jealousy of themselves, and an indignation at the baseness of Judas. It is good for us sometimes to be put to a gaze, to be put to a pause.

VI. The disciples were solicitous to get their Master to explain himself, and to tell them particularly whom he meant; for nothing but this can put them out of their present pain, for each of them thought he had as much reason to suspect himself as any of his brethren; now,

1. Of all the disciples John was most fit to ask, because he was the favourite, and sat next his Master (*v.* 23): *There was leaning on Jesus's bosom one of the disciples whom Jesus loved.* It appears that this was John, by comparing *ch.* xxi. 20, 24. Observe, (1.) The particular kindness which Jesus had for him; he was known by this periphrasis, that he was *the disciple whom Jesus loved.* He loved them all (*v.* 1), but John was particularly dear to him. His name signifies *gracious.* Daniel, who was honoured with the revelations of the Old Testament, as John of the New, was *a man greatly beloved*, Dan. ix. 23. Note, Among the disciples of Christ some are dearer to him than others. (2.) His place and posture at this time: He was *leaning on Jesus's bosom.* Some say that it was the fashion in those countries to sit at meat in a leaning posture, so that the second lay in the bosom of the first, and so on, which does not seem probable to me, for in such a posture as this they could neither eat nor drink conveniently; but, whether this was the case or not, John now *leaned on Christ's bosom*, and it seems to be an extraordinary expression of endearment used at this time. Note, There are some of Christ's disciples whom he lays in his bosom, who have more free and intimate communion with him than others. The Father loved the Son, and laid him *in his bosom* (*ch.* i. 18), and believers are in like manner one with Christ, *ch.* xvii. 21. This honour all the saints shall have shortly in the bosom of Abraham. Those who lay themselves at Christ's feet, he will lay in his bosom. (3.) Yet he conceals his name, because he himself was the penman of the story. He put this instead of his name, to show that he was pleased with it; it is his title of honour, that he was *the disciple whom*

Jesus loved, as in David's and Solomon's court there was one that was the *king's friend;* yet he does not put his name down, to show that he was not proud of it, nor would seem to boast of it. Paul in a like case saith, *I knew a man in Christ.*

2. Of all the disciples Peter was most forward to know, *v.* 24. Peter, sitting at some distance, beckoned to John, by some sign or other, to ask. Peter was generally the leading man, most apt to put himself forth; and, where men's natural tempers lead them to be thus bold in answering and asking, if kept under the laws of humility and wisdom, they make men very serviceable. God gives his gifts variously; but that the forward men in the church may not think too well of themselves, nor the modest be discouraged, it must be noted that it was not Peter, but John, that was the beloved disciple. Peter was desirous to know, not only that he might be sure it was not he, but that, knowing who it was, they might withdraw from him, and guard against him, and, if possible, prevent his design. It were a desirable thing, we should think, to know who in the church will deceive us; yet let this suffice—Christ knows, though we do not. The reason why Peter did not himself ask was because John had a much fairer opportunity, by the advantage of his seat at table, to whisper the question into the ear of Christ, and to receive a like private answer. It is good to improve our interest in those that are near to Christ, and to engage their prayers for us Do we know any that we have reason to think lie in Christ's bosom? Let us beg of them to speak a good word for us.

3. The question was asked accordingly (*v.* 25): *He then, lying at the breast of Jesus,* and so having the convenience of whispering with him, *saith unto him, Lord, who is it?* Now here John shows, (1.) A regard to his fellow-disciple, and to the motion he made. Though Peter had not the honour he had at this time, yet he did not therefore disdain to take the hint and intimation he gave him. Note, Those who lie in Christ's bosom may often learn from those who lie at his feet something that will be profitable for them, and be reminded of that which they did not of themselves think of. John was willing to gratify Peter herein, having so fair an opportunity for it. As every one hath received the gift, so let him minister the same for a common good, Rom. xii. 6. (2.) A reverence of his Master. Though he whispered this in Christ's ear, yet he called him Lord; the familiarity he was admitted to did not at all lessen his respect for his Master. It becomes us to use a reverence in expression, and to observe a decorum even in our secret devotions, which no eye is a witness to, as well as in public assemblies. The more intimate communion gracious souls have with Christ, the more sensible they are of his worthiness and their own unworthiness, as Gen. xviii. 27.

4. Christ gave a speedy answer to this question, but whispered it in John's ear; for it appears (*v.* 29) that the rest were still ignorant of the matter. *He it is to whom I shall give a sop,* ψωμιον—*a morsel, a crust, when I have dipped it* in the sauce. And *when he had dipped the sop,* John strictly observing his motions, *he gave it to Judas;* and Judas took it readily enough, not suspecting the design of it, but glad of a savoury bit, to make up his mouth with. (1.) Christ notified the traitor by a sign. He could have told John by name who he was (The adversary and enemy is that wicked Judas, he is the traitor, and none but he); but thus he would exercise the observation of John, and intimate what need his ministers have of a spirit of discerning; for the false brethren we are to stand upon our guard against are not made known to us by words, but by signs; they are to be known to us by *their fruits,* by *their spirits;* it requires great diligence and care to form a right judgment upon them. (2.) That sign was a sop which Christ gave him, a very proper sign, because it was the fulfilling of the scripture (*v.* 18), that the traitor should be one that *ate bread with him,* that was at this time a fellow-commoner with him. It had likewise a significancy in it, and teaches us, [1.] That Christ sometimes gives sops to traitors; worldly riches, honours, and pleasures are sops (if I may so speak), which Providence sometimes gives into the hands of wicked men. Judas perhaps thought himself a favourite because he had the sop, like Benjamin at Joseph's table, a mess by himself; thus the prosperity of fools, like a stupifying sop, helps to *destroy them.* [2.] That we must not be outrageous against those whom we know to be very malicious against us. Christ carved to Judas as kindly as to any at the table, though he knew he was then plotting his death. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him;* this is to do as Christ does.

VII. Judas himself, instead of being convinced hereby of his wickedness, was the more confirmed in it, and the warning given him was to him a *savour of death unto death;* for it follows,

1. The devil hereupon took possession of him (*v.* 27): *After the sop, Satan entered into him;* not to make him melancholy, nor drive him distracted, which was the effect of his possessing some; not to hurry him into the fire, nor into the water; happy had it been for him if that had been the worst of it, or if with the swine he had been choked in the sea; but Satan entered into him to possess him with a prevailing prejudice against Christ and his doctrine, and a contempt of him, as one whose life was of small value, to excite in him a covetous desire of the wages of unrighteousness and a resolution to stick at nothing for the obtaining of them. But,

(1.) Was not Satan in him before? How then is it said that now *Satan entered into*

him? Judas was all along a devil (*ch.* vi. 70), a son of perdition, but now Satan gained a more full possession of him, had a *more abundant entrance* into him. His purpose to betray his Master was now ripened into a fixed resolution; now he returned with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, Luke xi. 26. Note, [1.] Though the devil is in every wicked man that does his works (Eph. ii. 2), yet sometimes he enters more manifestly and more powerfully than at other times, when he puts them upon some enormous wickedness, which humanity and natural conscience startle at. [2.] Betrayers of Christ have much of the devil in them. Christ speaks of the sin of Judas as greater than that of any of his persecutors.

(2.) How came Satan to enter into him *after the sop?* Perhaps he was presently aware that it was the discovery of him, and it made him desperate in his resolutions. Many are made worse by the gifts of Christ's bounty, and are confirmed in their impenitency by that which should have led them to repentance. The *coals of fire heaped upon their heads*, instead of melting them, harden them.

2. Christ hereupon dismissed him, and delivered him up to his own heart's lusts: *Then said Jesus unto him, What thou doest, do quickly.* This is not to be understood as either advising him to his wickedness or warranting him in it; but either, (1.) As abandoning him to the conduct and power of Satan. Christ knew that Satan had entered into him, and had peaceable possession; and now he gives him up as hopeless. The various methods Christ had used for his conviction were ineffectual; and therefore, "What thou doest thou wilt do quickly; if thou art resolved to ruin thyself, go on, and take what comes." Note, When the evil spirit is willingly admitted, the good Spirit justly withdraws. Or, (2.) As challenging him to do his worst: "Thou art plotting against me, put thy plot in execution and welcome, the sooner the better, I do not fear thee, I am ready for thee." Note, our Lord Jesus was very forward to suffer and die for us, and was impatient of delay in the perfecting of his undertaking. Christ speaks of Judas's betraying him as a thing he was now doing, though he was only purposing it. Those who are contriving and designing mischief are, in God's account, doing mischief.

3. Those that were at table understood not what he meant, because they did not hear what he whispered to John (*v.* 28, 29): *No man at table,* neither the disciples nor any other of the guests, except John, *knew for what intent* he spoke this to him. (1.) They did not suspect that Christ said it to Judas as a traitor, because it did not enter into their heads that Judas was such a one, or would prove so. Note, It is an excusable dulness in the disciples of Christ not to be quick-sighted in their censures. Most are ready enough to say, when they hear harsh things spoken in general, Now such a one is meant, and now such a one; but Christ's disciples were so well taught to love one another that they could not easily learn to suspect one another; *charity thinks no evil.* (2.) They therefore took it for granted that he said it to him as a trustee, or treasurer of the household, giving him orders for the laying out of some money. Their surmises in this case discover to us for what uses and purposes our Lord Jesus commonly directed payments out of that little stock he had, and so teach us how to honour the Lord with our substance. They concluded something was to be laid out, either, [1.] In works of piety: *Buy those things that we have need of against the feast.* Though he borrowed a room to eat the passover in, yet he bought in provision for it. That is to be reckoned well bestowed which is laid out upon *those things we have need of* for the maintenance of God's ordinances among us; and we have the less reason to grudge that expense now because our gospel-worship is far from being so chargeable as the legal worship was. [2.] Or in works of charity: *That he should give something to the poor.* By this it appears, *First,* That our Lord Jesus, though he lived upon alms himself (Luke viii. 3), yet gave alms to the poor, a little out of a little. Though he might very well be excused, not only because he was poor himself, but because he did so much good in other ways, curing so many *gratis;* yet, to set us an example, he gave, for the relief of the poor, out of that which he had for the subsistence of his family; see Eph. iv. 28. *Secondly,* That the time of a religious feast was thought a proper time for works of charity. When he celebrated the passover he ordered something for the poor. When we experience God's bounty to us, this should make us bountiful to the poor.

4. Judas hereupon sets himself vigorously to pursue his design against him: He *went away.* Notice is taken,

(1.) Of his speedy departure: *He went out presently,* and quitted the house, [1.] For fear of being more plainly discovered to the company, for, if he were, he expected they would all fall upon him, and be the death of him, or at least of his project. [2.] He went out as one weary of Christ's company and the society of his apostles. Christ needed not to expel him, he expelled himself. Note, Withdrawing from the communion of the faithful is commonly the first overt-act of a backslider, and the beginning of an apostasy. [3.] *He went out* to prosecute his design, to look for those with whom he was to make his bargain, and to settle the agreement with them. Now that Satan had got into him he hurried him on with precipitation, lest he should see his error and repent of it.

(2.) Of the time of his departure: *It was*

night. [1.] Though it was night, an unseasonable time for business, yet, Satan having entered into him, he made no difficulty of the coldness and darkness of the night. This should shame us out of our slothfulness and cowardice in the service of Christ, that the devil's servants are so earnest and venturous in his service. [2.] Because it was night, and this gave him advantage of privacy and concealment. He was not willing to be *seen* treating with the chief priests, and therefore chose the dark night as the fittest time for such works of darkness. Those whose deeds are evil love darkness rather than light. See Job xxiv. 13, &c.

31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. 33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. 34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

This and what follows, to the end of *ch.* xiv., was Christ's table-talk with his disciples. When supper was done, Judas went out; but what did the Master and his disciples do, whom he left sitting at table? They applied themselves to profitable discourse, to teach us as much as we can to make conversation with our friends at table serviceable to religion. Christ begins this discourse. The more forward we are humbly to promote that communication which is good, and to the use of edifying, the more like we are to Jesus Christ. Those especially that by their place, reputation, and gifts, *command the company,* to whom *men give ear,* ought to use the interest they have in other respects as an opportunity of doing them good. Now our Lord Jesus discourses with them (and probably discourses much more largely than is here recorded),

I. Concerning the great mystery of his own death and sufferings, about which they were as yet so much in the dark that they could not persuade themselves to expect the thing itself, much less did they understand the meaning of it; and therefore Christ gives them such instructions concerning it as made the offence of the cross to cease. Christ did not begin this discourse till Judas was gone out, for he was a false brother. The presence of wicked people is often a hindrance to good discourse. When Judas *was gone out,* Christ said, *Now is the Son of man glorified;* now that Judas is discovered and discarded, who was a spot in their love-feast and a scandal to their family, *now is the Son of man glorified.* Note, Christ is glorified by the purifying of Christian societies: corruptions in his church are a reproach to him; the purging out of those corruptions rolls away the reproach. Or, rather, now Judas was gone to set the wheels a-going, in order to his being put to death, and the thing was likely to be effected shortly: *Now is the Son of man glorified,* meaning, *Now he is crucified.*

1. Here is something which Christ instructs them in, concerning his sufferings, that was very *comforting.*

(1.) That he should himself be glorified in them. Now the Son of man is to be exposed to the greatest ignominy and disgrace, to be despitefully used to the last degree, and dishonoured both by the cowardice of his friends and the insolence of his enemies; yet *now he is glorified;* For, [1.] Now he is to obtain a glorious victory over Satan and all the powers of darkness, to spoil them, and triumph over them. He is now *girding on the harness,* to take the field against these adversaries of God and man, with as great an assurance as if he had *put it off.* [2.] Now he is to work out a glorious deliverance for his people, by his death to reconcile them to God, and bring in an everlasting righteousness and happiness for them; to shed that blood which is to be an inexhaustible fountain of joys and blessings to all believers. [3.] Now he is to give a glorious example of self-denial and patience under the cross, courage and contempt of the world, zeal for the glory of God, and love to the souls of men, such as will make him to be for ever admired and had in honour. Christ had been glorified in many miracles he had wrought, and yet he speaks of his being glorified *now* in his sufferings, as if that were more than all his other glories in his humble state.

(2.) That God the Father should be glorified in them. The sufferings of Christ were, [1.] The satisfaction of God's justice, and so God was glorified in them. Reparation was thereby made with great advantage for the wrong done him in his honour by the sin of man. The ends of the law were abundantly answered, and the glory of his government effectually asserted and maintained. [2.] They were the manifestation of his holiness and mercy. The attributes of God shine brightly in creation and providence, but much more in the work of redemption; see 1 Cor. i. 24; 2 Cor. iv. 6. God is love, and herein he hath commended his love.

(3.) That he should himself be greatly glorified after them, in consideration of God's being greatly glorified by them, *v.* 32. Observe how he enlarges upon it. [1.] He is sure that God will glorify him; and those

whom God glorifies are glorious indeed. Hell and earth set themselves to vilify Christ, but God resolved to glorify him, and he did it. He glorified him in his sufferings by the amazing signs and wonders, both in heaven and earth, which attended them, and extorted even from his crucifiers an acknowledgment that he was the Son of God. But especially after his sufferings he glorified him, when he set him *at his own right hand*, gave him a *name above every name.* [2.] That he will glorify him *in himself*—ἐν ἑαυτῷ. Either, *First*, In Christ himself. He will glorify him in his own person, and not only in his kingdom among men. This supposes his speedy resurrection. A common person may be honoured after his death, in his memory or posterity, but Christ was honoured in *himself.* Or, *Secondly*, in God himself. God will glorify him *with himself*, as it is explained, *ch.* xvii. 5. *He shall sit down with the Father upon his throne*, Rev. iii. 21. This is true glory. [3.] That he will glorify him straightway. He looked upon the joy and glory set before him, not only as great, but as near; and his sorrows and sufferings short and soon over. Good services done to earthly princes often remain long unrewarded; but Christ had his preferments presently. It was but forty hours (or not so much) from his death to his resurrection, and forty days thence to his ascension, so that it might well be said that he was *straightway glorified*, Ps. xvi. 10. [4.] All this in consideration of God's being glorified in and by his sufferings: *Seeing God is glorified in him*, and receives honour from his sufferings, God shall in like manner glorify him in himself, and give honour to him. Note, *First*, In the exaltation of Christ there was a regard had to his humiliation, and a reward given for it. *Because he humbled himself, therefore God highly exalted him.* If the Father be so great a gainer in his glory by the death of Christ, we may be sure that the Son shall be no loser in his. See the covenant between them, Isa. liii. 12. *Secondly*, Those who mind the business of glorifying God no doubt shall have the happiness of being glorified with him.

2. Here is something that Christ instructs them in, concerning his sufferings, which was *awakening*, for as yet they were slow of heart to understand it (*v.* 33): *Little children, yet a little while I am with you, &c.* Two things Christ here suggests, to quicken his disciples to improve their present opportunities; two serious words:—

(1.) That his stay in this world, to be with them here, they would find to be very short. *Little children.* This compellation does not bespeak so much their weakness as his tenderness and compassion; he speaks to them with the affection of a father, now that he is about to leave them, and to leave blessings with them. Know this, then, that *yet a little while I am with you.* Whether we understand this as referring to his death or his ascension it comes much to one; he had but a little time to spend with them, and therefore, [1.] Let them improve the advantage they now had. If they had any good question to ask, if they would have any advice, instruction, or comfort, let them speak quickly; for *yet a little while I am with you.* We must make the best of the helps we have for our souls while we have them, because we shall not have them long; they will be taken from us, or we from them. [2.] Let them not doat upon his bodily presence, as if their happiness and comfort were bound up in that; no, they must think of living without it; not be always little children, but go alone, without their nurses. Ways and means are appointed but for a *little while*, and are not to be rested in, but pressed through to our rest, to which they have a reference.

(2.) That their following him to the other world, to be with him there, they would find to be very difficult. What he had said to the Jews (*ch.* vii. 34) he saith to his disciples; for they have need to be quickened by the same considerations that are propounded for the convincing and awakening of sinners. Christ tells them here, [1.] That when he was gone they would feel the want of him: *You shall seek me*, that is, "you shall wish you had me again with you." We are often taught the worth of mercies by the want of them. Though the presence of the Comforter yielded them real and effectual relief in straits and difficulties, yet it was not such a *sensible* satisfaction as his bodily presence would have been to those who had been used to it. But observe, Christ said to the Jews, You shall seek me and *not find me;* but to the disciples he only saith, *You shall seek me*, intimating that though they should not find his bodily presence any more than the Jews, yet they should find that which was tantamount, and should not seek in vain. When they sought his body in the sepulchre, though they did not find it, yet they sought to good purpose. [2.] That whither he went they *could not come*, which suggests to them high thoughts of him, who was going to an invisible inaccessible world, to dwell in that *light which none can approach unto;* and also low thoughts of themselves, and serious thoughts of their future state. Christ tells them that they could not follow him (as Joshua told the people that they could not serve the Lord) only to quicken them to so much the more diligence and care. They could not follow him to his cross, for they had not courage and resolution; it appeared that they could not when they all forsook him and fled. Nor could they follow him to his crown, for they had not a sufficiency of their own, nor were their work and warfare yet finished.

II. He discourses with them concerning the great duty of brotherly love (*v.* 34, 35): *You shall love one another.* Judas was now

gone out, and had proved himself a false brother; but they must not therefore harbour such jealousies and suspicions one of another as would be the bane of love: though there was one Judas among them, yet they were not all Judases. Now that the enmity of the Jews against Christ and his followers was swelling to the height, and they must expect such treatment as their Master had, it concerned them by brotherly love to strengthen one another's hands. Three arguments for mutual love are here urged:—

1. The command of their Master (*v.* 34): *A new commandment I give unto you.* He not only commends it as amiable and pleasant, not only counsels it as excellent and profitable, but commands it, and makes it one of the fundamental laws of his kingdom; it goes a-breast with the command of believing in Christ, 1 John iii. 23; 1 Pet. i. 22. It is the command of our ruler, who has a right to give law to us; it is the command of our Redeemer, who gives us this law in order to the curing of our spiritual diseases and the preparing of us for our eternal bliss. It is *a new commandment;* that is, (1.) It is a renewed commandment; it was a commandment *from the beginning* (1 John ii. 7), as old as the law of nature, it was the second great commandment of the law of Moses; yet, because it is also one of the great commandments of the New Testament, of Christ the new Lawgiver, it is called a new commandment; it is like an old book in a new edition corrected and enlarged. This commandment has been so corrupted by the traditions of the Jewish church that when Christ revived it, and set it in a true light, it might well be called a *new commandment.* Laws of revenge and retaliation were so much in vogue, and self-love had so much the ascendant, that the law of brotherly love was forgotten as obsolete and out of date; so that as it came from Christ new, it was new to the people. (2.) It is an excellent command, as a *new song* is an excellent song, that has an uncommon gratefulness in it. (3.) It is an everlasting command; so strangely new as to be always so; as the *new covenant,* which shall never decay (Heb. viii. 13); it shall be new to eternity, when faith and hope are antiquated. (4.) As Christ gives it, it is *new.* Before it was, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour;* now it is, You shall love *one another;* it is pressed in a more winning way when it is thus pressed as mutual duty owing to one another.

2. The example of their Saviour is another argument for brotherly love: *As I have loved you.* It is this that makes it a *new commandment*—that this rule and reason of *love (as I have loved you)* is perfectly new, and such as had been hidden from ages and generations. Understand this, (1.) Of all the instances of Christ's love to his disciples, which they had already experienced during the time he went in and out among them. He spoke kindly to them, concerned himself heartily for them, and for their welfare, instructed, counselled, and comforted them, prayed with them and for them, vindicated them when they were accused, took their part when they were run down, and publicly owned them to be dearer to him than his *mother, or sister, or brother.* He reproved them for what was amiss, and yet compassionately bore with their failings, excused them, made the best of them, and passed by many an oversight. Thus he *had* loved them, and just now washed their feet; and thus they *must* love one another, and love *to the end.* Or, (2.) It may be understood of the special instance of love to all his disciples which he was now about to give, in laying down his life for them. *Greater love hath no man than this, ch.* xv. 13. Has he thus loved us all? Justly may he expect that we should be loving to one another. Not that we are capable of doing any thing of the *same nature* for each other (Ps. xlix. 7), but we must love one another in some respects after the *same manner;* we must set this before us as our copy, and take directions from it. Our love to one another must be free and ready, laborious and expensive, constant and persevering; it must be love *to the souls* one of another. We must also love one another from *this motive,* and upon this consideration—because Christ has loved us. See Rom. xv. 1, 3; Eph. v. 2, 25; Phil. ii. 1—5.

3. The reputation of their profession (*v.* 35): *By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.* Observe, We must have love, not only show love, but have it in the root and habit of it, and have it when there is not any present occasion to show it; have it *ready.* "Hereby it will appear that you are indeed my followers by following me in this." Note, Brotherly love is the badge of Christ's disciples. By this he knows them, by this they may know themselves (1 John iii. 14), and by this others may know them. This is the livery of his family, the distinguishing character of his disciples; this he would have them *noted for,* as that wherein they excelled all others—their loving one another. This was what their Master was famous for; all that ever heard of him have heard of his love, his great love; and therefore, if you see any people more affectionate one to another than what is common, say, "Certainly these are the followers of Christ, they have been with Jesus." Now by this it appears, (1.) That the heart of Christ was very much upon it, that his disciples *should love one another.* In this they must be *singular;* whereas the way of the world is to be *every one for himself,* they should be hearty for one another. He does not say, *By this shall men know* that you are my disciples—if you *work miracles,* for a worker of miracles is but a cypher without charity (1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2); but *if you love one another* from a principle of

self-denial and gratitude to Christ. This Christ would have to be the *proprium* of his religion, the principal note of the true church. (2.) That it is the true honour of Christ's disciples to excel in brotherly love. Nothing will be more effectual than this to recommend them to the esteem and respect of others. See what a powerful attractive it was, Acts ii. 46, 47. Tertullian speaks of it as the glory of the primitive church that the Christians were known by their affection to one another. Their adversaries took notice of it, and said, *See how these Christians love one another*, Apol. cap. 39. (3.) That, if the followers of Christ do not love one another, they not only cast an unjust reproach upon their profession, but give just cause to suspect their own sincerity. *O Jesus! are these thy Christians*, these passionate, malicious, spiteful, ill-natured people? *Is this thy son's coat?* When our brethren stand in need of help from us, and we have an opportunity of being serviceable to them, when they differ in opinion and practice from us, or are any ways rivals with or provoking to us, and so we have an occasion to condescend and forgive, in such cases as this it will be known whether we have this badge of Christ's disciples.

36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. 37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. 38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

In these verses we have,

I. Peter's curiosity, and the check given to that.

1. Peter's question was bold and blunt (*v.* 36): *Lord, whither goest thou?* referring to what Christ had said (*v* 33), *Whither I go, you cdnnot come.* The practical instructions Christ had given them concerning brotherly love he overlooks, and asks no questions upon them, but fastens upon that concerning which Christ purposely kept them in the dark. Note, It is a common fault among us to be more inquisitive concerning things secret, which belong to God only, than concerning things *revealed, which belong to us and our children*, more desirous to have our curiosity gratified than our consciences directed, to know what is done in heaven than what we may do to get thither. It is easy to observe it in the converse of Christians, how soon a discourse of that which is plain and edifying is dropped, and no more said to it, the subject is exhausted; which in a matter of doubtful disputation runs into an endless strife of words.

2. Christ's answer was instructive. He did not gratify him with any particular account of the world he was going to, nor ever foretold his glories and joys so distinctly as he did his sufferings, but said what he had said before (*v.* 36): Let this suffice, *thou canst not follow me now, but shalt follow me hereafter.* (1.) We may understand it of his following him to the cross: "Thou hast not yet strength enough of faith and resolution to drink of my cup;" and it appeared so by his cowardice when Christ was suffering. For this reason, when Christ was seized, he provided for the safety of his disciples: *Let these go their way*, because they could not *follow him now.* Christ considers the frame of his disciples, and will not cut out for them that work and hardship which they are not as yet fit for; the day shall be as the strength is. Peter, though designed for martyrdom, cannot follow Christ now, not being come to his full growth, but he *shall follow* him *hereafter;* he shall be crucified at last, like his Master. Let him not think that because he escapes suffering now he shall never suffer. From our missing the cross once, we must not infer that we shall never meet it; we may be reserved for greater trials than we have yet known. (2.) We may understand it of his following him to the crown. Christ was now going to his glory, and Peter was very desirous to go with him: "No," saith Christ, "*thou canst not follow me now*, thou art not yet ripe for heaven, nor hast thou finished thy work on earth. The forerunner must *first enter to prepare a place* for thee, but *thou shalt follow me afterwards*, after thou hast fought the good fight, and at the time appointed." Note, Believers must not expect to be glorified as soon as they are effectually called, for there is a wilderness between the Red Sea and Canaan.

II. Peter's confidence, and the check given to that.

1. Peter makes a daring protestation of his constancy. He is not content to be left behind, but asks, "*Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?* Dost thou question my sincerity and resolution? I promise thee, if there be occasion, *I will lay down my life for thy sake.*" Some think Peter had a conceit, as the Jews had in a like case (*ch.* vii. 35), that Christ was designing a journey or voyage into some remote country, and that he declared his resolution to go along with him wherever he went; but, having heard his Master so often speak of his own sufferings, surely he could not understand him any otherwise than of his going away by death; and he resolves as Thomas did that he will *go and die with him;* and better die with him than live without him. See here, (1.) What an affectionate love Peter had to our Lord Jesus: "*I will lay down my life for thy sake*, and I can do no more." I believe

Peter spoke as he thought, and though he was inconsiderate he was not insincere, in his resolution. Note, Christ should be dearer to us than our own lives, which therefore, when we are called to it, we should be willing to lay down for his sake, Acts xx. 24. (2.) How ill he took it to have it questioned, intimated in that expostulation, "*Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?* Dost thou suspect my fidelity to thee?" 1 Sam. xxix. 8. Note, It is with regret that true love hears its own sincerity arraigned, as *ch.* xxi. 17. Christ had indeed said that one of them was a devil, but he was discovered, and gone out, and therefore Peter thinks he may speak with the more assurance of his own sincerity: "Lord, I am resolved I will never leave thee, and therefore *why cannot I follow thee?* We are apt to think that we can do any thing, and take it amiss to be told that this and the other we cannot do, whereas without Christ we can do nothing.

2. Christ gives him a surprising prediction of his inconstancy, *v.* 38. Jesus Christ knows us better than we know ourselves, and has many ways of discovering those to themselves whom he loves, and will hide pride from. (1.) He upbraids Peter with his confidence: *Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?* Methinks, he seems to have said this with a smile: "Peter, thy promises are too large, too lavish to be relied on; thou dost not consider with what reluctancy and struggle a life is laid down, and what a hard task it is to die; not so soon done as said." Christ hereby puts Peter upon second thoughts, not that he might retract his resolution, or recede from it, but that he might insert into it that necessary proviso, "Lord, *thy grace enabling me,* I will lay down my life for thy sake." "Wilt thou undertake to die for me? What! thou that trembledst to walk upon the water to me? What! thou that, when sufferings were spoken of, criedst out, *Be it far from thee, Lord?* It was an easy thing to leave thy boats and nets to follow me, but not so easy to lay down thy life." His Master himself struggled when it came to this, and *the disciple is not greater than his Lord.* Note, It is good for us to shame ourselves out of our presumptuous confidence in ourselves. Shall a bruised reed set up for a pillar, or a sickly child undertake to be a champion? What a fool am I to talk so big. (2.) He plainly foretels his cowardice in the critical hour. To stop the mouth of his boasting, lest Peter should say it again, Yea Master, that I will, Christ solemnly asserts it with, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice.* He does not say as afterwards, *This night,* for it seems to have been two nights before the passover; but, "Shortly thou wilt have denied me thrice within the space of one night; nay, within so short a space as between the first and last crowing of the cock: *the cock shall not crow,* shall not have crowed his crowing out, till thou hast again and again denied me, and that for fear of suffering. The crowing of the cock is mentioned, [1.] To intimate that the trial in which he would miscarry thus should be in the night, which was an improbable circumstance, but Christ's foretelling it was an instance of his infallible foresight. [2.] Because the crowing of the cock was to be the occasion of his repentance, which of itself would not have been if Christ had not put this into the prediction. Christ not only foresaw that Judas would betray him though he only in heart designed it, but he foresaw that Peter would deny him though he did not design it, but the contrary. He knows not only the wickedness of sinners, but the weakness of saints. Christ told Peter, *First,* That he would deny him, would renounce and abjure him: "Thou wilt not only not follow me still, but wilt be ashamed to own that ever thou didst follow me." *Secondly,* That he would do this not once only by a hasty slip of the tongue, but after he had paused would repeat it a second and third time; and it proved too true. We commonly give it as a reason why the prophecies of scripture are expressed darkly and figuratively, because, if they did *plainly* describe the event, the accomplishment would thereby either be defeated or necessitated by a fatality inconsistent with human liberty; and yet this plain and express prophecy of Peter's denying Christ did neither, nor did in the least make Christ accessary to Peter's sin. But we may well imagine what a mortification it was to Peter's confidence of his own courage to be told this, and to be told it in such a manner that he durst not contradict it, else he would have said as Hazael, *What! is thy servant a dog?* This could not but fill him with confusion. Note, The most secure are commonly the least safe; and those most shamefully betray their own weakness that most confidently presume upon their own strength, 1 Cor. x. 12.

CHAP. XIV.

This chapter is a continuation of Christ's discourse with his disciples after supper. When he had convicted and discarded Judas, he set himself to comfort the rest, who were full of sorrow upon what he had said of leaving them, and a great many good words and comfortable words he here speaks to them. The discourse is interlocutory; as Peter in the foregoing chapter, so Thomas, and Philip, and Jude, in this interposed their thoughts upon what he said, according to the liberty he was pleased to allow them. Free conferences are as instructive as solemn speeches, and more so. The general scope of this chapter is in the first verse; it is designed to keep trouble from their hearts; now in order to this they must believe: and let them consider, I. Heaven as their everlasting rest, ver. 2, 3. II. Christ himself as their way, ver. 4—11. III. The great power they shall be clothed with by the prevalency of their prayers, ver. 12—14. IV. The coming of another comforter, ver. 15—17. V. The fellowship and communion that should be between him and them after his departure, ver. 18—24. VI. The instructions which the Holy Ghost should give them, ver. 25, 26. VII. The peace Christ bequeathed to them, ver. 27. VII. Christ's own cheerfulness in his departure, ver. 28—31. And this which he said to them is designed for the comfort of all his faithful followers.

LET not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so,* I

would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

In these verses we have,

I. A general caution which Christ gives to his disciples against *trouble of heart* (*v.* 1): *Let not your heart be troubled.* They now began to be troubled, were entering into this temptation. Now here see,

1. How Christ took notice of it. Perhaps it was apparent in their looks; it was said (*ch.* xiii. 22), *They looked one upon another* with anxiety and concern, and Christ looked upon them all, and observed it; at least, it was intelligible to the Lord Jesus, who is acquainted with all our secret undiscovered sorrows, with the wound that bleeds inwardly; he knows not only how we are afflicted, but how we stand affected under our afflictions, and how near they lie to our hearts; he takes cognizance of all the trouble which his people are at any time in danger of being overwhelmed with; *he knows our souls in adversity.* Many things concurred to trouble the disciples now.

(1.) Christ had just told them of the unkindness he should receive from some of them, and this troubled them all. Peter, no doubt, looked very sorrowful upon what Christ said to him, and all the rest were sorry for him and for themselves too, not knowing whose turn it should be to be told next of some ill thing or other they should do. As to this, Christ comforts them; though a godly jealousy over ourselves is of great use to keep us humble and watchful, yet it must not prevail to the disquieting of our spirits and the damping of our holy joy.

(2.) He had just told them of his own departure from them, that he should not only go away, but go away in a cloud of sufferings. They must shortly hear him loaded with reproaches, and these will be *as a sword in their bones;* they must see him barbarously abused and put to death, and this also will be a sword piercing *through their own souls,* for they had loved him, and chosen him, and left all to follow him. When we now look upon Christ pierced, we cannot but *mourn and be in bitterness,* though we see the glorious issue and fruit of it; much more grievous must the sight be to them, who could then look no further. If Christ depart from them, [1.] They will think themselves shamefully disappointed; for they looked that this had been he that should have delivered Israel, and should have set up his kingdom in secular power and glory, and, in expectation of this, had lost all to follow him. Now, if he leave the world in the same circumstances of meanness and poverty in which he had lived, and worse, they are quite defeated. [2.] They will think themselves sadly deserted and exposed. They knew by experience what little presence of mind they had in difficult emergencies, that they could count upon nothing but being ruined and run down if they part with their Master. Now, in reference to all these, *Let not your hearts be troubled.* Here are three words, upon any of which the emphasis may significantly be laid. *First,* Upon the word *troubled,* μὴ ταρασσέσθω. Be not so troubled as to be put into a hurry and confusion, *like the troubled sea when* it cannot rest. He does not say, "Let not your hearts be sensible of the griefs, or sad because of them," but, "Be not ruffled and discomposed, be not cast down and disquieted," Ps. xlii. 5. *Secondly,* Upon the word *heart:* "Though the nation and city be troubled, though your little family and flock be troubled, yet *let not your heart be troubled.* Keep possession of your own souls when you can keep possession of nothing else. The heart is the main fort; whatever you do, keep trouble from this, keep this with *all diligence.* The spirit must *sustain the infirmity,* therefore, see that this be not *wounded. Thirdly,* Upon the word *your:* "You that are my disciples and followers, my redeemed, chosen, sanctified ones, however others are overwhelmed with the sorrows of this present time, be not you so, for you know better; let *the sinners in Zion* tremble, but let the *sons of Zion be joyful in their king.*" Herein Christ's disciples should *do more than others,* should keep their minds quiet, when every thing else is unquiet.

2. The remedy he prescribes against this trouble of mind, which he saw ready to prevail over them; in general, *believe*—πιστεύετε. (1.) Some read it in both parts imperatively, "*Believe in God,* and his perfections and providence, *believe also in me,* and my mediation. Build with confidence upon the great acknowledged principles of natural religion: that there is a God, that he is most holy, wise, powerful, and good; that he is the governor of the world, and has the sovereign disposal of all events; and comfort yourselves likewise with the peculiar doctrines of that holy religion which I have taught you." But, (2.) We read the former as an acknowledgment that they did believe in God, for which he commends them: "But, if you would effectually provide against a stormy day, *believe also in me.*" Through Christ we are brought into covenant with God, and become interested in his favour and promise, which otherwise as sinners we must despair of, and the remembrance of God would have been our trouble; but, by believing in Christ as the Mediator between God and man, our belief in God becomes comfortable; and this is the will of God, that *all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father,* by believing in the Son as they believe in the Father. Those that rightly believe in God will believe

in Jesus Christ, whom he has made known to them; and believing in God through Jesus Christ is an excellent means of keeping trouble from the heart. The joy of faith is the best remedy against the griefs of sense; it is a remedy with a promise annexed to it: *the just shall live by faith;* a remedy with a *probatum est* annexed to it. *I had fainted unless I had believed.*

II. Here is a particular direction to act faith upon the promise of eternal life, *v.* 2, 3. He had directed them to trust to God, and to trust in him; but what must they trust God and Christ for? Trust them for a happiness to come when this body and this world shall be no more, and for a happiness to last as long as the immortal soul and the eternal world shall last. Now this is proposed as a sovereign cordial under all the troubles of this present time, to which there is that in the happiness of heaven which is admirably adapted and accommodated. The saints have encouraged themselves with this in their greatest extremities, *That heaven would make amends for all.* Let us see how this is suggested here.

1. Believe and consider that really there is such a happiness: *In my Father's house there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, v.* 2.

(1.) See under what notion the happiness of heaven is here represented: as *mansions,* many mansions in Christ's Father's house. [1.] Heaven is a house, not a tent or tabernacle; it is *a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* [2.] It is a Father's house: *my Father's house;* and his Father is our Father, to whom he was now ascending; so that in right of their elder brother all true believers shall be welcome to that happiness as to their home. It is his house who is King of kings and Lord of lords, dwells in light, and inhabits eternity. [3.] There are *mansions* there; that is, *First,* Distinct dwellings, an apartment for each. Perhaps there is an allusion to the priests' chambers that were about the temple. In heaven there are accommodations for particular saints; though all shall be swallowed up in God, yet our individuality shall not be lost there; every Israelite had his lot in Canaan, and every elder *a seat,* Rev. iv. 4. *Secondly,* Durable dwellings. Μοναὶ, from μνείω, *maneo, abiding places.* The house itself is lasting; our estate in it is not for a term of years, but a perpetuity. Here we are as in an inn; in heaven we shall gain a settlement. The disciples had quitted their houses to attend Christ, who had not where to lay his head, but the mansions in heaven will make them amends. [4.] There are *many* mansions, for there are many sons to be brought to glory, and Christ exactly knows their number, nor will be straitened for room by the coming of more company than he expects. He had told Peter that he should follow him (*ch.* xiii. 36), but let not the rest be discouraged, in heaven there are mansions for them *all. Rehoboth,* Gen. xxvi. 22.

(2.) See what assurance we have of the reality of the happiness itself, and the sincerity of the proposal of it to us: "*If it were not so, I would have told you.* If you had deceived yourselves, when you quitted your livelihoods, and ventured your lives for me, in prospect of a happiness future and unseen, I would soon have undeceived you." The assurance is built, [1.] Upon the veracity of his word. It is implied, "If there were not such a happiness, valuable and attainable, I would not have told you that there was." [2.] Upon the sincerity of his affection to them. As he is true, and would not impose upon them himself, so he is kind, and would not suffer them to be imposed upon. If either there were no such mansions, or none designed for them, who had left all to follow him, he would have given them timely notice of the mistake, that they might have made an honourable retreat to the world again, and have made the best they could of it. Note, Christ's good-will to us is a great encouragement to our hope in him. He loves us too well, and means us too well, to disappoint the expectations of his own raising, or to leave those to be of all men most miserable who have been of him most observant.

2. Believe and consider that the design of Christ's going away was to prepare a place in heaven for his disciples. "You are grieved to think of my going away, whereas I go on your errand, *as the forerunner; I am to enter for you.*" He went to prepare a place for us; that is, (1.) To take possession for us, as our advocate or attorney, and so to secure our title as indefeasible. Livery of seisin was given to Christ, for the use and behoof of all that should believe on him. (2.) To make provision for us as our friend and father. The happiness of heaven, though prepared *before the foundation of the world,* yet must be further fitted up for man in his fallen state. It consisting much in the presence of Christ there, it was therefore necessary that he should *go before,* to enter into that glory which his disciples were to share in. Heaven would be an *unready* place for a Christian if Christ were not there. He went to prepare a table for them, to prepare thrones for them, Luke xxii. 30. Thus Christ declares the fitness of heaven's happiness for the saints, for whom it is prepared.

3. Believe and consider that *therefore* he would certainly come again in due time, to fetch them to that blessed place which he was now going to possess for himself and prepare for them (*v.* 3): "*If I go and prepare a place for you,* if this be the errand of my journey, you may be sure, when every thing is ready, *I will come again, and receive you to myself,* so that you shall follow me hereafter, *that where I am there you may be also.*" Now these are comfortable words indeed. (1.) That Jesus Christ will come again; ἔρχομαι

—*I do come*, intimating the certainty of it, that he will come and that he is daily coming. We say, We are coming, when we are busy in preparing for our coming, and so he is; all he does has a reference and tendency to his second coming. Note, The belief of Christ's second coming, of which he has given us the assurance, is an excellent preservative against trouble of heart, Phil. iv. 5; James v. 8. (2.) That he will come again to receive all his faithful followers to himself. He sends for them privately at death, and gathers them one by one; but they are to make their public entry in solemn state all together at the last day, and then Christ himself will come to receive them, to conduct them in the abundance of his grace, and to welcome them in the abundance of his love. He will hereby testify the utmost respect and endearment imaginable. The coming of Christ is in order to our *gathering together unto him*, 2 Thess. ii. 1. (3.) *That where he is there they shall be also.* This intimates, what many other scriptures declare, that the quintessence of heaven's happiness is being with Christ *there*, *ch.* xvii. 24; Phil. i. 23; 1 Thess. iv. 17. Christ speaks of his being there as now present, *that where I am;* where I am to be shortly, where I am to be eternally; there you shall be shortly, there you shall be eternally: not only *there*, in the same place; but *there*, in the same state: not only spectators of his glory, as the three disciples on the mount, but sharers in it. (4.) That this may be inferred from his *going to prepare a place* for us, for his preparations shall not be in vain. He will not build and furnish lodgings, and let them stand empty. He will be the finisher of that of which he is the author. If he has prepared the place for us, he will prepare us for it, and in due time put us in possession of it. As the resurrection of Christ is the assurance of our resurrection, so his ascension, victory, and glory, are an assurance of ours.

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. 7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Show us the Father? 10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Christ, having set the happiness of heaven before them as the end, here shows them himself as the way to it, and tells them that they were better acquainted both with the end they were to aim at and with the way they were to walk in than they thought they were: *You know*, that is, 1. "You may know; it is none of the *secret things* which belong not to you, but one of the *things revealed;* you *need not ascend into heaven*, nor *go down into the deep*, for *the word is nigh you* (Rom. x. 6—8), level to you." 2. "You do know; you know that which is the home and which is the way, though perhaps not as the home and as the way. You have been told it, and cannot but know, if you would recollect and consider it." Note, Jesus Christ is willing to make the best of his people's knowledge, though they are weak and defective in it. He knows the good that is in them better than they do themselves, and is certain that they have that knowledge, and faith, and love, of which they themselves are not sensible, or not certain.

This word of Christ gave occasion to two of his disciples to address themselves to him, and he answers them both.

I. Thomas enquired concerning the way (*v.* 5), without any apology for contradicting his Master.

1. He said, "*Lord, we know not whither thou goest*, to what place or what state, *and how can we know the way* in which we must follow thee? We can neither guess at it, nor enquire it out, but must still be at a loss." Christ's testimony concerning their knowledge made them more sensible of their ignorance, and more inquisitive after further light. Thomas here shows more modesty than Peter, who thought he could follow Christ now. Peter was the more solicitous to know *whither Christ went.* Thomas here, though he complains that he did not know this, yet seems more solicitous to know *the way.* Now, (1.) His confession of his ignorance was commendable enough. If good men be in the dark, and know but in part, yet they are willing to own their defects. But, (2.) The cause of his ignorance was culpable. They knew not whither Christ went, because they dreamed of a temporal kingdom in external pomp and power, and doted upon this, notwithstanding what he had said again and again to the contrary. Hence it was that, when Christ spoke of going away and their following him, their fancy ran upon his going

to some remarkable city or other, Bethlehem, or Nazareth, or Capernaum, or some of the cities of the Gentiles, as David to Hebron, there to be anointed king, and *to restore the kingdom to Israel;* and which way this place lay, where these castles in the air were to be built, east, west, north, or south, they could not tell, and therefore knew not the way. Thus still we think ourselves more in the dark than we need be, concerning the future state of the church, because we expect its worldly prosperity, whereas it is spiritual advancement that the promise points at. Had Thomas understood, as he might have done, that Christ was going to the invisible world, the world of spirits, to which spiritual things only have a reference, he would not have said, *Lord, we do not know the way.*

II. Now to this complaint of their ignorance, which included a desire to be taught, Christ gives a full answer, *v.* 6, 7. Thomas had enquired both whither he went and what was the way, and Christ answers both these enquiries and makes good what he had said, that they would have needed no answer if they had understood themselves aright; for they knew him, and he was the way; they knew the Father, and he was the end; and therefore, *whither I go you know, and the way you know.* Believe in God as the end, and in me as the way (*v.* 1), and you do all you should do.

(1.) He speaks of himself as the way, *v.* 6. Dost thou *not know the way? I am the way,* and I only, for *no man comes to the Father but by me.* Great things Christ here saith of himself, showing us,

[1.] The nature of his mediation: He is *the way, the truth, and the life.*

First, Let us consider these first distinctly. 1. Christ is *the way, the highway* spoken of, Isa. xxxv. 8. Christ was his own way, for by *his own blood he entered into the holy place* (Heb. ix. 12), and he is our way, for we enter by him. By his doctrine and example he teaches us our duty, by his merit and intercession he procures us our happiness, and so he is the way. In him God and man meet, and are brought together. We could not get to the tree of life in the way of innocency; but Christ is another way to it. By Christ, as the way, an intercourse is settled and kept up between heaven and earth; the angels of God ascend and descend; our prayers go to God, and his blessings come to us by him; this is *the way that leads to rest, the good old way.* The disciples followed him, and Christ tells them that they followed the road, and, while they continued following him, they would never be out of their way. 2. He is *the truth.* (1.) As truth is opposed to figure and shadow. Christ is the substance of all the Old-Testament types, which are therefore said to be *figures of the true,* Heb. ix. 24. Christ is *the true manna* (*ch.* vi. 32), *the true tabernacle,* Heb. viii. 2. (2.) As truth is opposed to falsehood and error; the doctrine of Christ is true doctrine. When we enquire for truth, we need learn no more than *the truth as it is in Jesus.* (3.) As truth is opposed to fallacy and deceit; he is true to all that trust in him, as true as truth itself, 2 Cor. i. 20. 3. He is *the life;* for we are *alive unto God* only in and *through Jesus Christ,* Rom. vi. 11. Christ formed in us is that to our souls which our souls are to our bodies. Christ is *the resurrection and the life.*

Secondly, Let us consider these jointly, and with reference to each other. Christ is *the way, the truth, and the life;* that is, 1. He is the beginning, the middle, and the end. In him we must set out, go on, and finish. As *the truth,* he is the guide of our way; as *the life,* he is the end of it. 2. He is *the true and living way* (Heb. x. 20); there are *truth and life* in the way, as well as at the end of it. 3. He is *the true way to life,* the only true way; other ways may seem right, but the end of them is *the way of death.*

[2.] The necessity of his mediation: *No man cometh to the Father but by me.* Fallen man must come to God as a Judge, but cannot come to him as a Father, otherwise than by Christ as Mediator. We cannot perform the duty of coming to God, by repentance and the acts of worship, without the Spirit and grace of Christ, nor obtain the happiness of coming to God as our Father without his merit and righteousness; he is the *high priest of our profession,* our advocate.

(2.) He speaks of his Father as the end (*v.* 7): "*If you had known me* aright, *you would have known my Father also; and henceforth,* by the glory you have seen in me and the doctrine you have heard from me, *you know him and have seen him.*" Here is, [1.] A tacit rebuke to them for their dulness and carelessness in not acquainting themselves with Jesus Christ, though they had been his constant followers and associates: *If you had known me*—. They knew him, and yet did not know him so well as they might and should have known him. They knew him to be the Christ, but did not follow on to know God in him. Christ had said to the Jews (*ch.* viii. 19): *If you had known me, you would have known my Father also;* and here the same to his disciples; for it is hard to say which is more strange, the wilful ignorance of those that are enemies to the light, or the defects and mistakes of *the children of light,* that have had such opportunities of knowledge. If they had known Christ aright, they would have known that his kingdom is spiritual, and *not of this world;* that *he came down from heaven,* and therefore must return *to heaven;* and then they would have known his Father also, would have known whither he designed to go, when he said, *I go to the Father,* to a glory in the other world, not in this. If we knew Christianity better, we should better know natural religion. [2.] A favourable intimation that he was well satis-

fied concerning their sincerity, notwithstanding the weakness of their understanding: "*And henceforth,* from my giving you this hint, which will serve as a key to all the instructions I have given you hitherto, let me tell you, *you know him, and have seen him,* inasmuch as you know me, and have seen me; for in the face of Christ we see the glory of God, as we see a father in his son that resembles him. Christ tells his disciples that they were not so ignorant as they seemed to be; for, though *little children,* yet they had known the Father, 1 John ii. 13. Note, Many of the disciples of Christ have more knowledge and more grace than they think they have, and Christ takes notice of, and is well pleased with, that good in them which they themselves are not aware of; for those that know God do not all at once know that they know him, 1 John ii. 3.

II. Philip enquired concerning the Father (*v.* 8), and Christ answered him, *v.* 9—11, where observe,

1. Philip's request for some extraordinary discovery of the Father. He was not so forward to speak as some others of them were, and yet, from an earnest desire of further light, he cries out, *Show us the Father.* Philip listened to what Christ said to Thomas, and fastened upon the last words, *You have seen him.* "Nay," says Philip, "that is what we want, that is what we would have: *Show us the Father and it sufficeth us.*" (1.) This supposes an earnest desire of acquaintance with God as a Father. The petition is, "*Show us the Father;* give us to know him in that relation to us;" and this he begs, not for himself only, but for the rest of the disciples. The plea is, *It sufficeth us.* He not only professes it himself, but will pass his word for his fellow-disciples. Grant us but one sight of the Father, and we have enough. Jansenius saith, "Though Philip did not mean it, yet the Holy Ghost, by his mouth, designed here to teach us that the satisfaction and happiness of a soul consist in the vision and fruition of God," Ps. xvi. 11; xvii. 15. In the knowledge of God the understanding rests, and is at the summit of its ambition; in the knowledge of God as our Father the soul is satisfied; a sight of the Father is a heaven upon earth, fills us *with joy unspeakable.* (2.) As Philip speaks it here, it intimates that he was not satisfied with such a discovery of the Father as Christ thought fit to give them, but he would prescribe to him, and press upon him, something further and no less than some visible appearance of *the glory of God,* like that to Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 22), and to *the elders of Israel,* Exod. xxiv. 9—11. "Let us see the Father with our bodily eyes, as we see thee, *and it sufficeth us;* we will trouble thee with no more questions, *Whither goest thou?*" And so it manifests not only the weakness of his faith, but his ignorance of the gospel way of manifesting *the Father,* which is spiritual, and not sensible. Such a sight of God, he thinks, would *suffice* them, and yet those who did thus see him were not *sufficed,* but soon *corrupted themselves, and made a graven image.* Christ's institutions have provided better for the confirmation of our faith than our own inventions would.

2. Christ's reply, referring him to the discoveries already made of the Father, *v.* 9—11.

(1.) He refers him to what he had seen, *v.* 9. He upbraids him with his ignorance and inadvertency: "*Have I been so long time with you,* now above three years intimately conversant with you, *and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* Now, *he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?* Wilt thou ask for that which thou hast already?" Now here,

[1.] He reproves him for two things: *First.* For not improving his acquaintance with Christ, as he might have done, to a clear and distinct knowledge of him: "*Hast thou not known me, Philip,* whom thou hast followed so long, and conversed with so much?" Philip, the first day he came to him, declared that he knew him to be the Messiah (*ch.* i. 45), and yet to this day did *not know the Father* in him. Many that have good knowledge in the scripture and divine things fall short of the attainments justly expected from them, for want of compounding the ideas they have, and going on to perfection. Many know Christ, who yet do not know what they might know of him, nor see what they should see in him. That which aggravated Philip's dulness was that he had so long an opportunity of improvement: *I have been so long time with thee.* Note, The longer we enjoy the means of knowledge and grace, the more inexcusable we are if we be found defective in grace and knowledge. Christ expects that our proficiency should be in some measure according to our standing, that we should not be always babes. Let us thus reason with ourselves: "Have I been so long a hearer of sermons, a student in the scripture, a scholar in the school of Christ, and yet so weak in *the knowledge of Christ,* and so unskilful in *the word of righteousness?*" *Secondly,* He reproves him for his infirmity in the prayer made, *Show us the Father.* Note, Herein appears much of the weakness of Christ's disciples that they *know not what to pray for as they ought* (Rom. viii. 26), but often *ask amiss* (Jam. iv. 3), for that which either is not promised or is already bestowed in the sense of the promise, as here.

[2.] He instructs him, and gives him a maxim which not only in general magnifies Christ and leads us to the knowledge of God in him, but justifies what Christ had said (*v.* 7): *You know the Father, and have seen him;* and answered what Philip had asked, *Show us the Father.* Why, saith Christ, the difficulty is soon over, for *he that hath seen me hath seen the Father. First,* All that saw

Christ in the flesh might *have seen the Father* in him, if Satan had not *blinded their minds*, and kept them from a sight of Christ, as *the image of God*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. *Secondly*, All that saw Christ by faith did *see the Father* in him, though they were not suddenly aware that they did so. In the light of Christ's doctrine they saw God as *the Father of lights;* in the miracles they saw God *as the God of power, the finger of God.* The holiness of God shone in the spotless purity of Christ's life, and his grace in all the acts of grace he did.

(2.) He refers him to what he had reason to believe (*v.* 10, 11): "*Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me*, and therefore that in *seeing me* thou hast *seen the Father?* Hast thou not believed this? If not, take my word for it, and believe it now."

[1.] See here what it is which we are to believe: *That I am in the Father, and the Father in me;* that is, as he had said (*ch.* x. 30), *I and my Father are one.* He speaks of the Father and himself as two persons, and yet so one as never any two were or can be. In knowing Christ as *God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made*, and as *being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made*, we know the Father; and in seeing him thus we see the Father. In Christ we behold more of *the glory of God* than Moses did at Mount Horeb.

[2.] See here what inducements we have to believe this; and they are two:—We must believe it, *First*, For his word's sake: *The words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself.* See *ch.* vii. 16, *My doctrine is not mine.* What he said seemed to them careless as *the word of man*, speaking his own thoughts at his own pleasure; but really it was the wisdom of God that indited it and the will of God that enforced it. *He spoke not of himself* only, but the mind of God according to the eternal counsels. *Secondly*, For his works' sake: *The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth them;* and therefore *believe me for their sake.* Observe, 1. The Father is said to *dwell* in him, *ὁ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων—he abideth in me*, by the inseparable union of the divine and human nature: never had God such a temple to dwell in on earth as *the body of the Lord Jesus, ch.* ii. 21. Here was the true Shechinah, of which that in the tabernacle was but a type. *The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily*, Col. ii. 9. The Father so dwells in Christ that in him he may *be found*, as a man where he dwells. *Seek ye the Lord, seek* him in Christ, and *he will be found*, for in him he dwells. 2. *He doeth the works* Many works of power, and works of mercy, Christ did, and the Father did them in him; and the work of redemption in general was God's own work. 3. We are bound to believe this, *for the very works' sake.* As we are to believe the being and perfections of God for the sake of the works of creation, which declare his glory; so we are to believe the revelation of God to man in Jesus Christ for the sake of the works of the Redeemer, those mighty works which, by showing forth themselves (Matt. xiv. 2), *Show forth him, and God in him.* Note, Christ's miracles are proofs of his divine mission, not only for the conviction of infidels, but for the confirmation of the faith of his own disciples, *ch.* ii. 11; v. 36; x. 37.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it.*

The disciples, as they were full of grief to think of parting with their Master, so they were full of care what would become of themselves when he was gone; while he was with them, he was a support to them, kept them in countenance, kept them in heart; but, if he leave them, they will be *as sheep having no shepherd*, an easy prey to those who seek to run them down. Now, to silence these fears, Christ here assures them that they should be clothed with powers sufficient to bear them out. As Christ had *all power*, they, in his name, should have great *power, both in heaven and in earth.*

I. Great power on earth (*v.* 12): *He that believeth on me* (as I know you do), *the works that I do shall he do also.* This does not weaken the argument Christ had taken from his works, to prove himself one with the Father (that others should do as *great works)*, but rather strengthens it; for the miracles which the apostles wrought were *wrought in his name*, and *by faith in him;* and this magnifies his power more than any thing, that he not only wrought miracles himself, but gave power to others to do so too.

1. Two things he assures them of:—

(1.) That they should be enabled to do such works as he had done, and that they should have a more ample power for the doing of them than they had had when he first sent them forth, Matt. x. 8. Did Christ *heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead?* So should they. Did he convince and convert sinners, and draw multitudes to him? So should they. Though he should depart, the work should not cease, nor fall to the ground, but should be carried on as vigorously and successfully as ever; and it is still in the doing.

(2.) That they should do *greater works than these.* [1.] In the kingdom of nature they should work greater miracles. No miracle is little, but some to our apprehension seem greater than others. Christ had healed with the hem of his garment, but Peter with his

shadow (Acts v. 15), Paul by the handkerchief that had touched him, Acts xix. 12. Christ wrought miracles for two or three years in one country, but his followers wrought miracles in his name for many ages in divers countries. *You shall do greater works*, if there be occasion, for the glory of God. *The prayer of faith*, if at any time it had been necessary, would have *removed mountains*. [2.] In the kingdom of grace. They should obtain greater victories by the gospel than had been obtained while Christ was upon earth. The truth is, the captivating of so great a part of the world to Christ, under such outward disadvantages, was the miracle of all. I think this refers especially to *the gift of tongues;* this was the immediate effect of the *pouring out of the Spirit*, which was a constant miracle upon the mind, in which words are framed, and which was made to serve so glorious an intention as that of spreading the gospel to all nations *in their own language*. This was a greater *sign to them that believed not* (1 Cor. xiv. 22), and more powerful for their conviction, than any other miracle whatever.

2. The reason Christ gives for this is, *Because I go unto my Father*, (1.) "*Because I go*, it will be requisite that you should have such a power, lest the work suffer damage by my absence." (2.) "*Because I go to the Father*, I shall be in a capacity to furnish you with such a power, for *I go to the Father, to send the Comforter*, from whom *you shall receive power*," Acts i. 8. The wonderful works which they did in Christ's name were part of the glories of his exalted state, *when he ascended on high*, Eph. iv. 8.

II. Great *power in heaven:* "*Whatsoever you shall ask, that will I do* (*v.* 13, 14), as Israel, who was a prince with God. Therefore you shall do such mighty works, because you have such an interest in me, and I in *my Father*." Observe,

1. In what way they were to keep up communion with him, and derive power from him, when he was gone to the Father—by prayer. When dear friends are to be removed to a distance from each other, they provide for the settling of a correspondence; thus, when Christ was going to his Father, he tells his disciples how they might write to him upon every occasion, and send their epistles by a safe and ready way of conveyance, without danger of miscarrying, or lying by the way: "Let me hear from you by prayer, *the prayer of faith*, and you shall hear from me by the Spirit." This was the old way of intercourse with Heaven, ever since *men began to call upon the name of the Lord;* but Christ by his death has laid it more open, and it is still open to us. Here is, (1.) Humility prescribed: *You shall ask*. Though they had quitted all for Christ, they could demand nothing of him as a debt, but must be humble supplicants, beg or starve, beg or perish. (2.) Liberty allowed: "Ask any thing, any thing that is good and proper for you; any thing, provided you know what you ask, you may ask; you may ask for assistance in your work, for a mouth and wisdom, for preservation out of the hands of your enemies, for power to work miracles when there is occasion, for the success of the ministry in the conversion of souls; ask to be informed, directed, vindicated." Occasions vary, but they shall be welcome to the throne of grace upon every occasion.

2. In what name they were to present their petitions: *Ask in my name*. To ask in Christ's name is, (1.) To plead his merit and intercession, and to depend upon that plea. The Old-Testament saints had an eye to this when they prayed *for the Lord's sake* (Dan. ix. 17), and *for the sake of the anointed* (Ps. lxxxiv. 9), but Christ's mediation is brought to a clearer light by the gospel, and so we are enabled more expressly to *ask in his name*. When Christ dictated the Lord's prayer, this was not inserted, because they did not then so fully understand this matter as they did afterwards, when the Spirit was poured out. If we ask *in our own name*, we cannot expect to speed, for, being strangers, we have *no name* in heaven; being sinners, we have an *ill name* there; but Christ's is a good name, well known in heaven, and very precious. (2.) It is to aim at his glory and to seek this as our highest end in all our prayers.

3. What success they should have in their prayers: "What you ask, *that will I do*, *v.* 13. And again (*v.* 14), "*I will do it*. You may be sure I will: not only it shall be done, I will see it done, or give orders for the doing of it, but *I will do it;*" for he has not only the interest of an intercessor, but the power of a sovereign prince, who *sits at the right hand of God*, the hand of action, and has the doing of all in the kingdom of God. By faith in his name we may have what we will for the asking.

4. For what reason their prayers should speed so well: *That the Father may be glorified in the Son*. That is, (1.) This they ought to aim at, and have their eye upon, in asking. In this all our desires and prayers should meet as in their centre; to this they must all be directed, that God in Christ may be honoured by our services, and in our salvation. *Hallowed be thy name* is an answered prayer, and is put first, because, if the heart be sincere in this, it does in a manner *consecrate* all the other petitions. (2.) This Christ will aim at in granting, and for the sake of this will do what they ask, that hereby the glory of the Father in the Son may be manifested. The wisdom, power, and goodness of God were magnified in the Redeemer when by a power derived from him, and exerted in his name and for his service, his apostles and ministers were enabled to do such great things, both in the proofs of their doctrine and in the successes of it.

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Christ not only proposes such things to them as were the matter of their comfort, but here promises to send the Spirit, whose office it should be to be their Comforter, to *impress* these things upon them.

I. He premises to this a memento of duty (*v.* 15): *If you love me, keep my commandments.* Keeping the commandments of Christ is here put for the practice of godliness in general, and for the faithful and diligent discharge of their office as apostles in particular. Now observe, 1. When Christ is comforting them, he bids them *keep his commandments;* for we must not expect comfort but in the way of duty. The same word (παρακαλέω) signifies both to exhort and to comfort. 2. When they were in care what they should do, now that their Master was leaving them, and what would become of them now, he bids them *keep his commandments,* and then nothing could come amiss to them. In difficult times our care concerning the events of the day should be swallowed up in a care concerning the duty of the day. 3. When they were showing their love to Christ by their grieving to think of his departure, and the sorrow which filled their hearts upon the foresight of that, he bids them, if they would show their love to him, do it, not by these weak and feminine passions, but by their conscientious care to perform their trust, and by a universal obedience to his commands; this is better than sacrifice, better than tears. *Lovest thou me? Feed my lambs.* 4. When Christ has given them precious promises, of the answer of their prayers and the coming of the Comforter, he lays down this as a limitation of the promises, "Provided you keep my commandments, from a principle of love to me." Christ will not be an advocate for any but those that will be ruled and advised by him as their counsel. Follow the conduct of the Spirit, and you shall have the comfort of the Spirit.

II. He promises this great and unspeakable blessing to them, *v.* 16, 17.

1. It is promised that they shall have *another comforter.* This is the great New-Testament promise (Acts i. 4), as that of the Messiah was of the Old Testament; a promise adapted to the present distress of the disciples, who were in sorrow, and needed a comforter. Observe here,

(1.) The blessing promised: ἄλλον παράκλητον. The word is used only here in these discourses of Christ's, and 1 John ii. 1, where we translate it an *advocate.* The Rhemists, and Dr. Hammond, are for retaining the *Greek* word *Paraclete;* we read, Acts ix. 31, of the παρακλήσις τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, the *comfort of the Holy Ghost,* including his whole office as a paraclete. [1.] You shall have another *advocate.* The office of the Spirit was to be Christ's advocate with them and others, to plead his cause, and take care of his concerns, on earth; to be *vicarius Christi—Christ's Vicar,* as one of the ancients call him; and to be their advocate with their opposers. When Christ was with them he spoke for them as there was occasion; but now that he is leaving them they shall not be run down, the Spirit of the Father shall speak in them, Matt. x. 19, 20. And the cause cannot miscarry that is pleaded by such an advocate. [2.] You shall have another *master* or *teacher,* another *exhorter.* While they had Christ with them he excited and exhorted them to their duty; but now that he is going he leaves one with them that shall do this as effectually, though silently. Jansenius thinks the most proper word to render it by is a *patron,* one that shall both instruct and protect you. [3.] Another *comforter.* Christ was expected as the consolation of Israel. One of the names of the Messiah among the Jews was *Menahem—the Comforter.* The Targum calls the days of the Messiah *the years of consolation.* Christ comforted his disciples when he was with them, and now that he was leaving them in their greatest need he promises them *another.*

(2.) The giver of this blessing: *The Father* shall give him, *my Father* and *your Father;* it includes both. The same that gave the Son to be our Saviour will give his Spirit to be our comforter, pursuant to the same design. The Son is said to send the Comforter (*ch.* xv. 26), but the Father is the prime agent.

(3.) How this blessing is procured—by the intercession of the Lord Jesus: *I will pray the Father.* He said (*v.* 14) *I will do it;* here he saith, *I will pray for it,* to show not only that he is both God and man, but that he is both king and priest. As priest he is ordained for men to make intercession, as king he is authorized by the Father to execute judgment. When Christ saith, *I will pray the Father,* it does not suppose that the Father is unwilling, or must be importuned to it, but only that the gift of the Spirit is a fruit of Christ's mediation, purchased by his merit, and taken out by his intercession.

(4.) The continuance of this blessing: *That he may abide with you for ever.* That is, [1.] "*With you,* as long as you live. You shall never know the want of a comforter, nor lament his departure, as you are now lamenting mine." Note, It should support us under the loss of those comforts which were designed us for a time that there are ever-

fasting consolations provided for us. It was not expedient that Christ should be with them for ever, for they who were designed for public service, must not always live a college-life; they must disperse, and therefore a comforter that would be with them all, in all places alike, wheresoever dispersed and howsoever distressed, was alone fit to be with them for ever. [2.] "With your successors, when you are gone, to the end of time; your successors in Christianity, in the ministry." [3.] If we take *for ever* in its utmost extent, the promise will be accomplished in those consolations of God which will be the eternal joy of all the saints, *pleasures for ever.*

2. This comforter is the *Spirit of truth, whom you know, v.* 16, 17. They might think it impossible to have a comforter equivalent to him who is the Son of God: "Yea," saith Christ, "you shall have the Spirit of God, who is equal in power and glory with the Son."

(1.) The comforter promised is *the Spirit,* one who should do his work in a spiritual way and manner, inwardly and invisibly, by working on men's spirits.

(2.) "He is the *Spirit of truth.* He will be true to you, and to his undertaking for you, which he will perform to the utmost. He will *teach you the truth,* will enlighten your minds with the knowledge of it, will strengthen and confirm your belief of it, and will increase your love to it. The Gentiles by their idolatries, and the Jews by their traditions, were led into gross errors and mistakes; but the Spirit of truth shall not only *lead you into all truth,* but others by your ministry. Christ is the truth, and he is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit that he was anointed with.

(3.) He is one *whom the world cannot receive;* but *you know him. Therefore he abideth with you.* [1.] The disciples of Christ are here distinguished from the world, for they are chosen and called out of the world that lies in wickedness; they are the children and heirs of another world, not of this. [2.] It is the misery of those that are invincibly devoted to the world that they *cannot receive* the Spirit of truth. The spirit *of the world* and *of God* are spoken of as directly contrary the one to the other (1 Cor. ii. 12); for where the spirit of the world has the ascendant, the Spirit of God is excluded. Even the *princes of this world,* though, as princes, they had advantages of knowledge, yet, as princes of this world, they laboured under invincible prejudices, so that they knew not *the things of the Spirit of God,* 1 Cor. ii. 8. [3.] Therefore men *cannot receive the Spirit of truth* because they *see him not, neither know him.* The comforts of the Spirit are *foolishness to them,* as much as ever the cross of Christ was, and the great things of the gospel, like those of the law, are counted as a strange thing. These are judgments far above out of their sight. Speak to the children of this world of the operations of the Spirit, and you are as a barbarian to them [4.] The best knowledge of the Spirit of truth is that which is got by experience: *You know him, for he dwelleth with you.* Christ had dwelt with them, and by their acquaintance with him they could not but know *the Spirit of truth.* They had themselves been endued with the Spirit in some measure. What enabled them to leave all to follow Christ, and to continue with him in his temptations? What enabled them to preach the gospel, and work miracles, but the Spirit dwelling in them? The experiences of the saints are the explications of the promises; paradoxes to others are axioms to them. [5.] Those that have an experimental acquaintance with the Spirit have a comfortable assurance of his continuance: He *dwelleth with you, and shall be in you,* for the blessed Spirit doth not use to shift his lodging. Those that know him know how to value him, invite him and bid him welcome; and therefore he shall be in them, as the light in the air, as the sap in the tree, as the soul in the body. Their communion with him shall be intimate, and their union with him inseparable. [6.] The gift of the Holy Ghost is a peculiar gift, bestowed upon the disciples of Christ in a distinguishing way—them, and not the world; it is to them *hidden manna,* and the *white stone.* No comforts comparable to those which make no show, make no noise. This is the favour God bears to his chosen; it is the *heritage of those that fear his name.*

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. 20 At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. 22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? 23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

When friends are parting, it is a common request they make to each other, "Pray let us hear from you as often as you can:" this

Christ engaged to his disciples, that out of sight they should not be out of mind.

I. He promises that he would continue his care of them (*v.* 18): "*I will not leave you orphans,* or *fatherless;* for, though I leave you, yet I leave you this comfort, *I will come to you.*" His departure from them was that which grieved them; but it was not so bad as they apprehended, for it was neither total nor final. 1. Not total. "Though I leave you without my bodily presence, yet I do not leave you without comfort." Though children, and left *little,* yet they had received the adoption of sons, and his Father would be their Father, with whom those who otherwise would be fatherless find mercy. Note, The case of true believers, though sometimes it may be sorrowful, is never comfortless, because they are never orphans: for God is their Father, who is an *everlasting Father.* 2. Not final: *I will come to you,* ἔρχομαι—*I do come;* that is, (1.) "I will come speedily to you at my resurrection, I will not be long away, but will be with you again in a little time." He had often said, *The third day I will rise again.* (2.) "I will be coming daily to you in my Spirit;" in the tokens of his love, and visits of his grace, he is still coming. (3.) "I will come certainly at the end of time; surely I will come quickly to introduce you into the joy of your Lord." Note, The consideration of Christ's coming to us saves us from being comfortless in his removals from us; for, if he *depart for a season,* it is *that we may receive him for ever.* Let this moderate our grief, *The Lord is at hand.*

II. He promises that they should continue their acquaintance with him and interest in him (*v.* 19, 20): *Yet a little while, and the world sees me no more,* that is, Now I am no more in the world. After his death, *the world saw him no more,* for, though he rose to life, he never *showed himself to all the people,* Acts x. 41. The malignant world thought they had seen enough of him, and *cried, Away with him; crucify him;* and so shall their doom be; they shall see him no more. Those only that see Christ with an eye of faith shall see him for ever. The world sees him no more till his second coming; but his disciples have communion with him in his absence.

1. *You see me,* and shall continue to see me, when *the world sees me no more.* They saw him with their bodily eyes after his resurrection, for he showed himself to them *by many infallible proofs,* Acts i. 8. And *then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord* They saw him with an eye of faith after his ascension, sitting at God's right hand, as Lord of all; saw that in him which the world saw not.

2. *Because I live, you shall live also.* That which grieved them was, that their Master was dying, and they counted upon nothing else but to die with him. No, saith Christ, (1.) *I live;* this the great God glories in, *I live,* saith the Lord, and Christ saith the same; not only, I shall live, as he saith of them, but, I do live; for he has *life in himself,* and *lives for evermore.* We are not comfortless, while *we know that our Redeemer lives.* (2.) Therefore *you shall live also.* Note, The life of Christians is bound up in the life of Christ; as sure and as long as he lives, those that by faith are united to him shall live also; they shall live spiritually, a divine life in communion with God. This life is hid with Christ; if the head and root live, the members and branches live also. They shall *live eternally;* their bodies shall rise in the virtue of Christ's resurrection; it will be well with them in the world to come. It cannot but be well with all that are his, Isa. xxvi. 19.

3. You shall have the assurance of this (*v.* 20): *At that day,* when I am glorified, when the Spirit is poured out, *you shall know* more clearly and certainly than you do now that *I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.* (1.) These glorious mysteries will be fully known in heaven: *At that day,* when I shall receive you to myself, you shall know perfectly that which now you *see through a glass darkly.* Now it appears not *what we shall be,* but then it will appear what we were. (2.) They were more fully known after the pouring out of the Spirit upon the apostles; at that day divine light should shine, and their eyes should see more clearly, their knowledge should greatly advance and increase then, would become more extensive and more distinct, and like the blind man's at the second touch of Christ's hand, who at first only *saw men as trees walking.* (3.) They are known by all that receive the Spirit of truth, to their abundant satisfaction, for in the knowledge of this is founded their *fellowship with the Father* and *his Son Jesus Christ.* They know, [1.] That *Christ is in the Father,* is one with the Father, by their experience of what he has wrought for them and in them; they find what an admirable consent and harmony there is between Christianity and natural religion, that that is grafted into this, and so they know that Christ *is in the Father.* [2.] That Christ is in them; experienced Christians know by the Spirit that Christ abides in them, 1 John iii. 24. [3.] That they are in Christ, for the relation is mutual, and equally near on both sides, Christ in them and they in Christ, which speaks an intimate and inseparable union; in the virtue of which it is that *because he lives they shall live also.* Note, *First,* Union with Christ is the life of believers; and their relation to him, and to God through him, is their felicity. *Secondly,* The knowledge of this union is their unspeakable joy and satisfaction; they were now in Christ, and he in them, but he speaks of it as a further act of grace that they should know it, and have the comfort of it. An interest in Christ and the knowledge of it are sometimes separated.

III. He promises that he would love them,

and manifest himself to them. *v.* 21—24. Here observe,

1. Who they are whom Christ will look upon, and accept, as lovers of him; those that *have his commandments, and keep them.* By this Christ shows that the kind things he here said to his disciples were intended not for those only that were *now* his *followers,* but for all that should *believe in him through their word.* Here is, (1.) The duty of those who claim the dignity of being disciples. Having Christ's commandments, we must keep them; as Christians in name and profession we have Christ's commandments, we have them sounding in our ears, written before our eyes, we have the knowledge of them; but this is not enough; would we approve ourselves Christians indeed, we must keep them. Having them in our heads, we must keep them in our hearts and lives. (2.) The dignity of those that do the duty of disciples. They are looked upon by Christ to be such as love him. Not those that have the greatest wit and know how to talk for him, or the greatest estate to lay out for him, but those that *keep his commandments.* Note, The surest evidence of our love to Christ is obedience to the laws of Christ. Such is the love of a subject to his sovereign, a dutiful, respectful, obediential love, a conformity to his will, and satisfaction in his wisdom.

2. What returns he will make to them for their love; rich returns; there is no love lost upon Christ. (1.) They shall have the Father's love: *He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father.* We could not love God if he did not first, out of his good-will to us, give us his grace to love him; but there is a love of complacency promised to those that do love God, Prov. viii. 17. He loves them, and lets them know that he loves them, smiles upon them, and embraces them. God so loves the Son as to love all those that love him. (2.) They shall have Christ's love: *And I will love him,* as God-man, as Mediator. God will love him as a Father, and I will love him as a brother, an elder brother. The Creator will love him, and be the felicity of his being; the Redeemer will love him, and be the protector of his well-being. In the nature of God, nothing shines more brightly than this, that *God is love.* And in the undertaking of Christ nothing appears more glorious than this, that *he loved us.* Now both these loves are the crown and comfort, the *grace and glory,* which shall be to all those that *love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.* Christ was now leaving his disciples, but promises to continue his love to them; for he not only retains a kindness for believers, though absent, but is doing them kindness while absent, for he bears them on his heart, and ever lives interceding for them. (3.) They shall have the comfort of that love: *I will manifest myself to him.* Some understand it of Christ's showing himself alive to his disciples after his resurrection; but, being promised to all that *love him and keep his commandments,* it must be construed so as to extend to them. There is a spiritual manifestation of Christ and his love made to all believers. When he enlightens their minds to know his love, and the dimensions of it (Eph. iii. 18, 19), enlivens their graces, and draws them into exercise, and thus enlarges their comforts in himself—when he clears up the evidences of their interest in him, and gives them tokens of his love, experience of his tenderness, and earnests of his kingdom and glory,—then he manifests himself to them; and Christ is manifested to none but those to whom he is pleased to manifest himself.

3. What occurred upon Christ's making this promise.

(1.) One of the disciples expresses his wonder and surprise at it, *v.* 22. Observe, [1.] Who it was that said this—*Judas, not Iscariot.* Judah, or Judas, was a famous name; the most famous tribe in Israel was that of Judah; two of Christ's disciples were of that name: one of them was the traitor, the other was the brother of James (Luke vi. 16), one of those that were akin to Christ, Matt. xiii. 55. He is called *Lebbeus* and *Thaddeus,* was the penman of the last of the epistles, which in our translation, for distinction's sake, we call *the epistle of Jude.* This was he that spoke here. Observe, *First,* There was a very good man, and a very bad man, called by the same name; for names commend us not to God, nor do they make men worse. Judas the apostle was never the worse, nor Judas the apostate ever the better, for being namesakes. But, *Secondly,* The evangelist carefully distinguishes between them; when he speaks of this pious Judas, he adds, *not Iscariot.* Take heed of mistaking; let us not confound the precious and the vile. [2.] What he said—*Lord how is it?* which intimates either, *First,* the weakness of his understanding. So some take it. He expected the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, that it should appear in external pomp and power, such as all the world would wonder after. "How, then," thinks he, "should it be confined to us only?" *τί γέγονεν*—"*what is the matter* now, that thou wilt not show thyself openly as is expected, that *the Gentiles may come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising?*" Note, We create difficulties to ourselves by mistaking the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if it were of this world. Or, *Secondly,* as expressing the strength of his affections, and the humble and thankful sense he had of Christ's distinguishing favours to them: *Lord, how is it?* He is amazed at the condescensions of divine grace, as David, 2 Sam. vii. 18. What is there in us to deserve so great a favour? Note, 1. Christ's manifesting himself to his disciples is done in a distinguishing way—to them, and *not to the world* that *sits in darkness;* to the *base,* and not to the *mighty* and

noble; to *babes*, and not to the *wise* and *prudent*. Distinguishing favours are very obliging; considering who are passed by, and who are pitched upon. 2. It is justly *marvellous in our eyes;* for it is unaccountable, and must be resolved into free and sovereign grace. *Even so, Father, because it seemed good unto thee.*

(2.) Christ, in answer hereto, explains and confirms what he had said, *v.* 23, 24. He overlooks what infirmity there was in what Judas spoke, and goes on with his comforts.

[1.] He further explains the condition of the promise, which was loving him, and keeping his commandments. And, as to this, he shows what an inseparable connection there is between love and obedience; love is the root, obedience is the fruit. *First,* Where a sincere love to Christ is in the heart, there will be obedience: "*If a man love me* indeed, that love will be such a commanding constraining principle in him, that, no question, he will *keep my words.*" Where there is true love to Christ there is a value for his favour, a veneration for his authority, and an entire surrender of the whole man to his direction and government. Where love is, duty follows of course, is easy and natural, and flows from a principle of gratitude. *Secondly,* On the other hand, where there is no true love to Christ there will be no care to obey him: *He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings, v.* 24. This comes in here as a discovery of those that *do not love Christ;* whatever they pretend, certainly those do not love him that believe not his truths, and obey not his laws, to whom Christ's sayings are but as idle tales, which he heeds not, or hard sayings, which he likes not. It is also a reason why Christ will not manifest himself to the world that doth not *love him,* because they put this affront upon him, not to *keep his sayings;* why should Christ be familiar with those that will be strange to him?

[2.] He further explains the promise (*v.* 23): *If a man thus love me, I will manifest myself to him. First, My Father will love him;* this he had said before (*v.* 21), and here repeats it for the confirming of our faith; because it is hard to imagine that the great God should make those the objects of his love that had made themselves *vessels of his wrath.* Jude wondered that Christ should *manifest himself to them;* but this answers it, "If my Father love you, why should not I be free with you?" *Secondly, We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* This explains the meaning of Christ's manifesting himself to him, and magnifies the favour. 1. Not only, *I will,* but, *We will, I and the Father,* who, in this, *are one.* See *v.* 9. The light and love of God are communicated to man in the light and love of the Redeemer, so that wherever Christ is formed the image of God is stamped. 2. Not only, "*I will show myself to him* at a distance," but, "*We will come to him,* to be near him, to be with him," such are the powerful influences of divine graces and comforts upon the souls of those that love Christ in sincerity. 3. Not only, "I will give him a transient view of me, or make him a short and running visit," but, *We will take up our abode with him,* which denotes complacency in him and constancy to him. God will not only love obedient believers, but he will take a pleasure in loving them, will rest in love to them, Zeph. iii. 17. He will be with them as at his home.

[3.] He gives a good reason both to bind us to observe the condition and encourage us to depend upon the promise. *The word which you hear is not mine, but his that sent me, v.* 24. To this purport he had often spoken (*ch.* vii. 16; viii. 28; xii. 44), and here it comes in very pertinently. *First,* the stress of duty is laid upon the precept of Christ as our rule, and justly, for that word of Christ which we are to keep is the Father's word, and his will the Father's will. *Secondly,* The stress of our comfort is laid upon the promise of Christ. But forasmuch as, in dependence upon that promise, we must deny ourselves, and take up our cross, and quit all, it concerns us to enquire whether the security be sufficient for us to venture our all upon; and this satisfies us that it is, that the promise is not Christ's bare word, but the Father's which sent him, which therefore we may rely upon.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you. 26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. 27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Two things Christ here comforts his disciples with:—

I. That they should be under the tuition of his Spirit, *v.* 25, 26, where we may observe,

1. The reflection Christ would have them make upon the instructions he had given them: *These things have I spoken unto you* (referring to all the good lessons he had taught them, since they entered themselves into his school), *being yet present with you.* This intimates, (1.) That what he had said he did not retract nor unsay, but ratify it, or stand to it. What he had spoken he had spoken, and would abide by it. (2.) That he had improved the opportunity of his bodily presence with them to the utmost: "As long as I have been yet present with them, you know I have lost no time." Note, When our teachers are about to be removed from us we should call to mind what they have spoken, *being yet present with us.*

2. The encouragement given them to expect another teacher, and that Christ would find out a way of speaking to them after his departure from them, *v.* 26. He had told them before that the Father would give them this other comforter (*v.* 16), and here he returns to speak of it again; for as the promise of the Messiah had been, so the promise of the Spirit now was, the consolation of Israel. Two things he here tells them further concerning the sending of the Holy Ghost:—

(1.) On whose account he should be sent: "The Father will send him *in my name;* that is, for *my sake*, at my special instance and request;" or, "as my agent and representative." He came in his Father's name, as his ambassador: the Spirit comes in his name, as resident in his absence, to carry on his undertaking, and to ripen things for his second coming. Hence he is called *the Spirit of Christ*, for he pleads his cause, and does his work.

(2.) On what errand he should be sent; two things he shall do:—[1.] *He shall teach you all things*, as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation Christ was a teacher to his disciples; if he leave them now that they have made so little proficiency, what will become of them? Why, the Spirit shall teach them, shall be their standing tutor. He shall teach them all things necessary for them either to learn themselves, or to teach others. For those that would teach the things of God must first themselves be taught of God; this is the Spirit's work. See Isa. lix. 21. [2.] *He shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.* Many a good lesson Christ had taught them, which they had forgotten, and which would be to seek when they had occasion for it. Many things they did not retain the remembrance of, because they did not rightly understand the meaning of them. The Spirit shall not teach them a new gospel, but bring to their minds that which they had been taught, by leading them into the understanding of it. The apostles were all of them to preach, and some of them to write, the things that Jesus did and taught, to transmit them to distant nations and future ages; now, if they had been left to themselves herein, some needful things might have been forgotten, others misrepresented, through the treachery of their memories; therefore the Spirit is promised to enable them truly to relate and record what Christ said unto them. And to all the saints the Spirit of grace is given to be a remembrancer, and to him by faith and prayer we should commit the keeping of what we hear and know.

II. That they should be under the influence of his peace (*v.* 27): *Peace I leave with you.* When Christ was about to leave the world he *made his will.* His soul he committed to his Father; his body he bequeathed to Joseph, to be decently interred; his clothes fell to the soldiers; his mother he left to the care of John: but what should he leave to his poor disciples, that had left all for him? Silver and gold he had none; but he left them that which was infinitely better, *his peace.* "*I leave you*, but I leave *my peace* with you. I not only give you a title to it, but put you in possession of it." He did not part in anger, but in love; for this was his farewell, *Peace I leave with you*, as a dying father leaves portions to his children; and this is a *worthy portion.* Observe,

1. The legacy that is here bequeathed: *Peace, my peace.* Peace is put for all good, and Christ has left us all needful good, all that is really and truly good, all the purchased promised good. Peace is put for reconciliation and love; the peace bequeathed is peace with God, peace with one another; peace *in our own bosoms* seems to be especially meant; a tranquillity of mind arising from a sense of our justification before God. It is the counterpart of our pardons, and the composure of our minds. This Christ calls *his* peace, for he is himself our peace, Eph. ii. 14. It is the peace he purchased for us and preached to us, and on which the angels congratulated men at his birth, Luke ii. 14.

2. To whom this legacy is bequeathed: "To you, my disciples and followers, that will be exposed to trouble, and have need of peace; to you that are the sons of peace, and are qualified to receive it." This legacy was left to them as the representatives of the church, to them and their successors, to them and all true Christians in all ages.

3. In what manner it is left: *Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.* That is, (1.) "I do not compliment you with *Peace be unto you;* no, it is not a mere formality, but a real blessing." (2.) "The peace I give is of such a nature that the smiles of the world cannot give it, nor the frowns of the world take it away." Or, (3.) "The gifts I give to you are not such as this world gives to its children and votaries, to whom it is kind." The world's gifts concern only the body and time; Christ's gifts enrich the soul for eternity: the world gives lying vanities, and that which will cheat us; Christ gives substantial blessings, which will never fail us: the world gives and takes; Christ gives a good part that shall *never be taken away.* (4.) The peace which Christ gives is infinitely more valuable than that which the world gives. The world's peace begins in ignorance, consists with sin, and ends in endless troubles; Christ's peace begins in grace, consists with no allowed sin, and ends at length in everlasting peace. As is the difference between a killing lethargy and a reviving refreshing sleep, such is the difference between Christ's peace and the world's.

4. What use they should make of it: *Let not your heart be troubled*, for any evils past or present, *neither let it be afraid* of any evil to come. Note, Those that are interested in

the covenant of grace, and entitled to the peace which Christ gives, ought not to yield to overwhelming griefs and fears. This comes in here as the conclusion of the whole matter; he had said (*v.* 1), *Let not your heart be troubled,* and here he repeats it as that for which he had now given sufficient reason.

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. 30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. 31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise let us go hence.

Christ here gives his disciples another reason why their hearts should not be troubled for his going away; and that is, because his heart was not. And here he tells them what it was that enabled him to endure the cross and despise the shame, that they might *look unto him,* and *run with patience.* He comforted himself,

I. That, though he went away, he should *come again: "You have heard how I have said,* and now I say it again, *I go away, and come again."* Note, What we have heard of the doctrine of Christ, especially concerning his second coming, we have need to be told again and again. When we are under the power of any transport of passion, grief, or fear, or care, we forget that Christ will come again. See Phil. iv. 5. Christ encouraged himself with *this,* in his sufferings and death, that he should *come again,* and the same should comfort us in our departure at death; we go away to come again; the leave we take of our friends at that parting is only a good night, not a final farewell. See 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.

II. That he *went to his Father: "If you loved me,* as by your sorrow you say you do, *you would rejoice* instead of mourning, because, though I leave you, yet I said, *I go unto the Father,* not only mine, but yours, which will be my advancement and your advantage; for *my Father is greater than I."* Observe here, 1. It is matter of joy to Christ's disciples that he is gone to the Father, to take possession for orphans, and make intercession for transgressors. His departure had a bright side as well as a dark side. Therefore he sent this message after his resurrection (*ch.* xx. 17), *I ascend to my Father and your Father,* as most comfortable. 2. The reason of this is, because *the Father is greater than he,* which, if it be a proper proof of that for which it is alleged (as no doubt it is), must be understood thus, that his state with his Father would be much more excellent and glorious than his present state; his returning to his Father (so Dr. Hammond) would be the advancing of him to a much higher condition than that which he was now in. Or thus, His going to the Father himself, and bringing all his followers to him there, was the ultimate end of his undertaking, and therefore greater than the means. Thus Christ raises the thoughts and expectations of his disciples to something greater than that in which now they thought all their happiness bound up. The kingdom of the Father, wherein he shall be all in all, will be greater than the mediatorial kingdom. 3. The disciples of Christ should show that they love him by their rejoicing in the glories of his exaltation, rather than by lamenting the sorrows of his humiliation, and rejoicing that he is gone to his Father, where he would be, and where we shall be shortly with him. Many that love Christ, let their love run out in a wrong channel; they think if they love him they must be continually in pain because of him; whereas those that love him should *dwell at ease* in him, should *rejoice in Christ Jesus.*

III. That his going away, compared with the prophecies which went before of it, would be a means of confirming the faith of his disciples (*v.* 29): *I have told you before it come to pass* that I must die and rise again, and ascend to the Father, and send the Comforter, *that, when it is come to pass, you might believe."* See this reason, *ch.* xiii. 19; xvi. 4. Christ told his disciples of his death, though he knew it would both puzzle them and grieve them, because it would afterwards redound to the confirmation of their faith in two things:—1. That he who foretold these things had a divine prescience, and knew beforehand what a day would bring forth. When St. Paul was going to Jerusalem, he *knew not the things that did abide him there,* but Christ did. 2. That the things foretold were according to the divine purpose and designation, not sudden resolves, but the counterparts of an eternal counsel. Let them therefore not be troubled at that which would be for the confirmation of their faith, and so would redound to their real benefit; for the *trial of our faith* is very precious, though it cost us present *heaviness, through manifold temptations,* 1 Pet. i. 6.

IV. That he was sure of a victory over Satan, with whom he knew he was to have a struggle in his departure (*v.* 30): *"Henceforth I will not talk much with you,* having not much to say, but what may be adjourned to the pouring out of the Spirit." He had a great deal of good talk with them after this (*ch.* xv. and xvi), but, in comparison with what he had said, it was not much. His time was now short, and he therefore spoke

largely to them now, because the opportunity would soon be over. Note, We should always endeavour to talk to the purpose, because perhaps we may not have time to talk much. We know not how soon our breath may be stopped, and therefore should be always breathing something that is good. When we come to be sick and die, perhaps we may not be capable of talking much to those about us; and therefore what good counsel we have to give them, let us give it while we are in health. One reason why he would not talk much with them was because he had now other work to apply himself to: *The prince of this world comes.* He called the devil the *prince of this world, ch.* xii. 31. The disciples dreamed of their Master being the prince of this world, and they worldly princes under him. But Christ tells them that the *prince of this world* was his enemy, and so were the *princes of this world,* that were actuated and ruled by him, 1 Cor. ii. 8. But *he has nothing in me.* Observe here, 1. The prospect Christ had of an approaching conflict, not only with men, but with the powers of darkness. The devil had set upon him with his temptations (Matt. iv.), had offered him the *kingdoms of this world,* if he would hold them as tributary to him, with an eye to which Christ calls him, in disdain, *the prince of this world. Then the devil departed from him for a season;* "But now," says Christ, "I see him rallying again, preparing to make a furious onset, and so to gain by terrors that which he could not gain by allurements;" to frighten from his undertaking, when he could not entice from it. Note, The foresight of a temptation gives us great advantage in our resistance of it; for, being fore-warned, we should be fore-armed. While we are here, we may see Satan continually coming against us, and ought therefore to be always upon our guard. 2. The assurance he had of good success in the conflict: *He hath nothing in me,* οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν—*He hath nothing at all.* (1.) There was no guilt in Christ to give authority to *the prince of this world* in his terrors. The devil is said to have *the power of death* (Heb. ii. 14); the Jews called him *the angel of death,* as an executioner. Now Christ having done no evil, Satan had no legal power against him, and therefore, though he prevailed to crucify him, he could not prevail to terrify him; though he hurried him to death, yet not to despair. When Satan comes to disquiet us, he has something in us to perplex us with, for we have all sinned; but, when he would disturb Christ, he found no occasion against him. (2.) There was no corruption in Christ, to give advantage to *the prince of this world* in his temptations. He could not crush his undertaking by drawing him to sin, because there was nothing sinful in him, nothing irregular for his temptations to fasten upon, no tinder for him to strike fire into; such was the spotless purity of his nature that he was above the possibility of sinning. The more Satan's interest in us is crushed and decays, the more comfortably may we expect sufferings and death.

V. That his departure was in compliance with, and obedience to, his Father. Satan could not force his life from him, and yet he would die: *that the world may know that I love the Father, v.* 31. We may take this,

1. As confirming what he had often said, that his undertaking, as Mediator, was a demonstration to the world, (1.) Of his compliance with the Father; hereby it appeared that he loved the Father. As it was an evidence of his love to man that he died for his salvation, so it was of his love to God that he died for his glory and the accomplishing of his purposes. Let the world know that between the Father and the Son there is no love lost. *As the Father loved the Son, and gave all things into his hands;* so *the Son loved the Father,* and *gave his spirit into his hand.* (2.) Of his obedience to his Father: "*As the Father gave me commandment, even so I* did—did the thing commanded in the manner commanded." Note, The best evidence of our love to the Father is our doing as he hath given us commandment. As Christ loved the Father, and obeyed him, *even to the death,* so we must love Christ, and obey him. Christ's eye to the Father's commandment, obliging him to suffer and die, bore him up with cheerfulness, and overcame the reluctancies of nature; this took off the offence of the cross, that what he did was by order from the Father. The command of God is sufficient to bear us out in that which is most disputed by others, and therefore should be sufficient to bear us up in that which is most difficult to ourselves: *This is the will of him* that made me, *that sent me.*

2. As concluding what he had now said; having brought it to this, here he leaves it: *that the world may know that I love the Father.* You shall see how cheerfully I can meet the appointed cross: "*Arise, let us go hence* to the garden;" so some; or, to *Jerusalem.* When we talk of troubles at a distance, it is easy to say, *Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest;* but when it comes to the pinch, when an unavoidable cross lies in the way of duty, then to say, "*Arise, let us go* to meet it," instead of going out of our way to miss it, this lets *the world know that we love the Father.* If this discourse was at the close of the passover-supper, it should seem that at these words he arose from the table, and retired into the drawing-room, where he might the more freely carry on the discourse with his disciples in the following chapters, and pray with them. Dr. Goodwin's remark upon this is, that Christ mentioning the great motive of his sufferings, his Father's commandment, was in all haste to go forth to suffer and die, was afraid of slipping the time of Judas's meeting him: *Arise,* says he, *let us go hence.*

but he looks upon the glass, as it were, sees it not quite out, and therefore sits down again, and preaches another sermon. Now, (1.) In these words he gives his disciples an encouragement to follow him. He does not say, *I must go;* but, *Let us go.* He calls them out to no hardships but what he himself goes before them in as their leader. They had promised they would not desert him: "Come," says he, "*let us go* then; let us see how you will make the words good." (2.) He gives them an example, teaching them at all times, especially in suffering times, to sit loose to all things here below, and often to think and speak of leaving them. Though we sit easy, and in the midst of the delights of an agreeable conversation, yet we must not think of being here always: *Arise, let us go hence.* If it was at the close of the paschal and eucharistical supper, it teaches us that the solemnities of our communion with God are not to be constant in this world. When we sit down under Christ's shadow with delight, and say, *It is good to be here;* yet we must think of rising and going hence; going down from the mount.

CHAP. XV.

It is generally agreed that Christ's discourse in this and the next chapter was at the close of the last supper, the night in which he was betrayed, and it is a continued discourse, not interrupted as that in the foregoing chapter was; and what he chooses to discourse of is very pertinent to the present sad occasion of a farewell sermon. Now that he was about to leave them, I. They would be tempted to leave him, and return to Moses again; and therefore he tells them how necessary it was that they should by faith adhere to him and abide in him. II. They would be tempted to grow strange one to another; and therefore he presses it upon them to love one another, and to keep up that communion when he was gone which had hitherto been their comfort. III. They would be tempted to shrink from their apostleship, when they met with hardships; and therefore he prepares them to bear the shock of the world's ill will. There are four words to which his discourse in this chapter may be reduced; 1. Fruit, ver. 1—8. 2. Love, ver. 9—17. 3. Hatred, ver. 18—25. 4. The Comforter, ver. 26, 27.

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Here Christ discourses concerning the fruit, *the fruits of the Spirit,* which his disciples were to bring forth, under the similitude of a vine. Observe here,

I. The doctrine of this similitude; what notion we ought to have of it.

1. That Jesus Christ is *the vine, the true vine.* It is an instance of the humility of Christ that he is pleased to speak of himself under low and humble comparisons. He that is *the Sun of righteousness,* and *the bright and morning Star,* compares himself to a *vine.* The church, which is Christ mystical, is a vine (Ps. lxxx. 8), so is Christ, who is the church seminal. Christ and his church are thus set forth. (1.) He is *the vine,* planted in the vineyard, and not a spontaneous product; planted in the earth, for he is *the Word made flesh.* The vine has an unsightly unpromising outside; and Christ had *no form nor comeliness,* Isa. liii. 2. The vine is a spreading plant, and Christ will be known as *salvation to the ends of the earth.* The fruit of the vine honours God and cheers man (Judg. ix. 13), so does the fruit of Christ's mediation; it is *better than gold,* Prov. viii. 19. (2.) He is *the true vine,* as truth is opposed to pretence and counterfeit; he is really a fruitful plant, a plant of renown. He is not like that wild vine which deceived those who gathered of it (2 Kings iv. 39), but a true vine. Unfruitful trees are said to *lie* (Hab. iii. 17. *marg.*), but Christ is a vine that will not deceive. Whatever excellency there is in any creature, serviceable to man, it is but a shadow of that grace which is in Christ for his people's good. He is that true vine typified by Judah's vine, which enriched him with the blood of the grape (Gen. xlix. 11), by Joseph's vine, the branches of which *ran over the wall* (Gen. xlix. 22), by Israel's vine, under which he *dwelt safely,* 1 Kings iv. 25.

2. That believers are branches of this vine, which supposes that Christ is the root of the vine. The root is unseen, and our *life is hid with Christ;* the root bears the tree (Rom. xi. 18), diffuses sap to it, and is all in all to its flourishing and fruitfulness; and in Christ are all supports and supplies. The branches of the vine are many, some on one side of the house or wall, others on the other side; yet, meeting in the root, are all but one vine; thus all good Christians, though in place and opinion distant from each other, yet meet in Christ, the centre of their unity. Believers, like the branches of the vine, are weak, and insufficient to stand of themselves, but as they are borne up. See Ezek. xv. 2.

3. That *the Father is the husbandman,* γεωργὸς—*the land-worker.* Though *the earth is the Lord's,* it yields him no fruit unless he work it. God has not only a propriety in, but a care of, the vine and all the branches.

He *hath planted, and watered, and gives the increase;* for *we are God's husbandry,* 1 Cor. iii. 9. See Isa. v. 1, 2; xxvii. 2, 3. He had an eye upon Christ, the root, and upheld him, and made him to flourish *out of a dry ground.* He has an eye upon all the branches, and prunes them, and watches over them, that nothing hurt them. Never was any husbandman so wise, so watchful, about his vineyard, as God is about his church, which therefore must needs prosper.

II. The duty taught us by this similitude, which is to *bring forth fruit,* and, in order to this, to *abide* in Christ.

1. We must be fruitful. From a vine we look for grapes (Isa. v. 2), and from a Christian we look for Christianity; this is the *fruit,* a Christian temper and disposition, a Christian life and conversation, Christian devotions and Christian designs. We must honour God, and do good, and exemplify the purity and power of the religion we profess; and this is bearing fruit. The disciples here must be fruitful, as Christians, in all *the fruits of righteousness,* and as apostles, in diffusing the savour of the knowledge of Christ. To persuade them to this, he urges,

(1.) The doom of the unfruitful (*v.* 2): They are *taken away.* [1.] It is here intimated that there are many who pass for *branches* in Christ who yet do *not bear fruit.* Were they really united to Christ by faith, they would bear fruit; but being only tied to him by the thread of an outward profession, though they seem to be branches, they will soon be seen to be dry ones. Unfruitful professors are unfaithful professors; professors, and no more. It might be read, *Every branch that beareth not fruit in me,* and it comes much to one; for those that do not bear fruit in Christ, and in his Spirit and grace, are as if they bore no fruit at all, Hos. x. 1. [2.] It is here threatened that they shall be *taken away,* in justice to them and in kindness to the rest of the branches. From him that has not real union with Christ, and fruit produced thereby, *shall be taken away even that which he seemed to have,* Luke viii. 18. Some think this refers primarily to Judas.

(2.) The promise made to the fruitful: *He purgeth them, that they may bring forth more fruit.* Note, [1.] Further fruitfulness is the blessed reward of forward fruitfulness. The first blessing was, *Be fruitful;* and it is still a great blessing. [2.] Even fruitful branches, in order to their further fruitfulness, have need of purging or pruning; καθαίρει—*he taketh away that which is superfluous* and luxuriant, which hinders its growth and fruitfulness. The best have that in them which is peccant, *aliquid amputandum—something which should be taken away;* some notions, passions, or humours, that want to be purged away, which Christ has promised to do by his word, and Spirit, and providence; and these shall be taken off by degrees in the proper season. [3.] The purging of fruitful branches, in order to their greater fruitfulness, is the care and work of the great husbandman, for his own glory.

(3.) The benefits which believers have by the doctrine of Christ, the power of which they should labour to exemplify in a fruitful conversation: *Now you are clean, v.* 3. [1.] Their society was clean, now that Judas was expelled by that word of Christ, *What thou doest, do quickly;* and till they were got clear of him *they were not all clean.* The word of Christ is a distinguishing word, and separates *between the precious and the vile;* it will purify *the church of the first-born* in the great dividing day. [2.] They were each of them clean, that is, sanctified, by the truth of Christ (*ch.* xvii. 17); that faith by which they received the word of Christ *purified their hearts,* Acts xv. 9. The Spirit of grace by the word refined them from the dross of the world and the flesh, and purged out of them *the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees,* from which, when they saw their inveterate rage and enmity against their Master, they were now pretty well cleansed. Apply it to all believers. The word of Christ is spoken to them; there is a cleansing virtue in that word, as it works grace, and works out corruption. It cleanses as fire cleanses the gold from its dross, and as physic cleanses the body from its disease. We then evidence that we are cleansed by the word when we *bring forth fruit unto holiness.* Perhaps here is an allusion to the law concerning vineyards in Canaan; the fruit of them was as unclean, and uncircumcised, the first three years after it was planted, and *the fourth year it* was to *be holiness of praise unto the Lord;* and then it was clean, Lev. xix. 23, 24. The disciples had now been three years under Christ's instruction; and *now you are clean.*

(4.) The glory that will redound to God by our fruitfulness, with the comfort and honour that will come to ourselves by it, *v.* 8. If we *bear much fruit,* [1.] Herein our Father will be glorified. The fruitfulness of the apostles, as such, in the diligent discharge of their office, would be to the glory of God in the conversion of souls, and the offering of them up to him, Rom. xv. 9, 16. The fruitfulness of all Christians, in a lower or narrower sphere, is to the glory of God. By the eminent good works of Christians many are brought to *glorify our Father who is in heaven.* [2.] So shall we be Christ's disciples indeed, approving ourselves so, and making it to appear that we are really what we call ourselves. So shall we both evidence our discipleship and adorn it, and be to our Master *for a name and a praise,* and a glory, that is, disciples indeed, Jer. xiii. 11. So shall we be owned by our Master in the great day, and have the reward of disciples, a share *in the joy of our Lord.* And the more fruit we bring forth, the more we abound in that which is good, the more he is glorified.

2. In order to our fruitfulness, we must

abide in Christ, must keep up our union with him by faith, and do all we do in religion in the virtue of that union. Here is,

(1.) The duty enjoined (*v.* 4): *Abide in me, and I in you.* Note, It is the great concern of all Christ's disciples constantly to keep up a dependence upon Christ and communion with him, habitually to adhere to him, and actually to derive supplies from him. Those that are come to Christ must abide in him: "*Abide in me,* by faith; *and I in you,* by my Spirit; *abide in me,* and then fear not but I will *abide in you;*" for the communion between Christ and believers never fails on his side. We must abide in Christ's word by a regard to it, and it in us as a *light to our feet.* We must abide in Christ's merit as our righteousness and plea, and it in us as our support and comfort. The knot of the branch abides in the vine, and the sap of the vine abides in the branch, and so there is a constant communication between them.

(2.) The necessity of our abiding in Christ, in order to our fruitfulness (*v.* 4, 5): "*You cannot bring forth fruit, except you abide in me;* but, if you do, you *bring forth much fruit; for,* in short, *without me,* or separate from me, *you can do nothing.*" So necessary is it to our comfort and happiness that we be fruitful, that the best argument to engage us to abide in Christ is, that otherwise we cannot be fruitful. [1.] Abiding in Christ is necessary in order to our doing much good. He that is constant in the exercise of faith in Christ and love to him, that lives upon his promises and is led by his Spirit, *bringeth forth much fruit,* he is very serviceable to God's glory, and his own account in the great day. Note, Union with Christ is a noble principle, productive of all good. A life of faith in the Son of God is incomparably the most excellent life a man can live in this world; it is regular and even, pure and heavenly; it is useful and comfortable, and all that answers the end of life. [2.] It is necessary to our doing any good. It is not only a means of cultivating and increasing what good there is already in us, but it is the root and spring of all good: "*Without me you can do nothing:* not only no great thing, *heal the sick, or raise the dead,* but nothing." Note, We have as necessary and constant a dependence upon the grace of the Mediator for all the actions of the spiritual and divine life as we have upon the providence of the Creator for all the actions of the natural life; for, as to both, it is in the divine power *that we live, move, and have our being.* Abstracted from the merit of Christ, we can do nothing towards our justification; and from the Spirit of Christ nothing towards our sanctification. *Without Christ we can do nothing* aright, nothing that will be fruit pleasing to God or profitable to ourselves, 2 Cor. iii. 5. We depend upon Christ, not only as the vine upon the wall, for support; but, as the branch on the root, for sap.

(3.) The fatal consequences of forsaking Christ (*v.* 6): *If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch.* This is a description of the fearful state of hypocrites that are *not in Christ,* and of apostates that *abide not in Christ.* [1.] They are cast forth as dry and withered branches, which are plucked off because they cumber the tree. It is just that those should have no benefit by Christ who think they have no need of him; and that those who reject him should be rejected by him. Those that abide not in Christ shall be abandoned by him; they are left to themselves, to fall into scandalous sin, and then are justly cast out of the communion of the faithful. [2.] They are withered, as a branch broken off from the tree. Those that abide not in Christ, though they may flourish awhile in a plausible, at least a passable profession, yet in a little time wither and come to nothing. Their parts and gifts wither; their zeal and devotion wither; their credit and reputation wither; their hopes and comforts wither, Job viii. 11—13. Note, Those that bear no fruit, after awhile will bear no leaves. *How soon is that fig-tree withered away* which Christ has cursed! [3.] *Men gather them.* Satan's agents and emissaries pick them up, and make an easy prey of them. Those that fall off from Christ presently fall in with sinners; and the sheep that wander from Christ's fold, the devil stands ready to seize them for himself. When the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, an evil spirit possessed him. [4.] They *cast them into the fire,* that is, they are cast into the fire; and those who seduce them and draw them to sin do in effect cast them there; for they *make them children of hell.* Fire is the fittest place for withered branches, for they are good for nothing else, Ezek. xv. 2—4. [5.] *They are burned;* this follows of course, but it is here added very emphatically, and makes the threatening very terrible. They will not be consumed in a moment, like *thorns under a pot* (Eccl. vii. 6), but καίεται, they are burning for ever in a fire, which not only cannot be quenched, but will never spend itself. This comes of quitting Christ, this is the end of barren trees. Apostates are *twice dead* (Jude 12), and when it is said, *They are cast into the fire and are burned,* it speaks as if they were twice damned. Some apply men's gathering them to the ministry of the angels in the great day, when they shall gather out of Christ's kingdom all things that offend, and shall *bundle the tares for the fire.*

(4.) The blessed privilege which those have that *abide in Christ* (*v.* 7): *If my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will* of my Father in my name, *and it shall be done.* See here, [1.] How our union with Christ is maintained—by the word: *If you abide in me;* he had said before, *and I in you;* here he explains himself, *and my words abide in you;* for it is in the word that Christ is set before us, and offered to us, Rom. x. 6—8. It is in the

word that we receive and embrace him; and so where the *word of Christ dwells richly* there Christ dwells. If the word be our constant guide and monitor, if it be in us as at home, then we abide in Christ, and he in us. [2.] How our communion with Christ is maintained—by prayer: *You shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you.* And what can we desire more than to have what we will for the asking? Note, Those that abide in Christ as their heart's delight shall have, through Christ, their heart's desire. If we have Christ, we shall want nothing that is good for us. Two things are implied in this promise:—*First,* That if we abide in Christ, and his word in us, we shall not ask any thing but what is proper to be done for us. The promises abiding in us lie ready to be turned into prayers; and the prayers so regulated cannot but speed. *Secondly,* That if we *abide in Christ and his word* we shall have such an interest in God's favour and Christ's mediation that we shall have an answer of peace to all our prayers.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full. 12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. 16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. 17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Christ, who is love itself, is here discoursing concerning love, a fourfold love.

I. Concerning the Father's love to him; and concerning this he here tells us, 1. That the Father did love him (*v.* 9): *As the Father hath loved me.* He loved him as Mediator: *This is my beloved Son.* He was the Son of his love. He loved him, and gave *all things into his hand;* and yet so *loved the world* as to deliver him up for us all. When Christ was entering upon his sufferings he comforted himself with this, that his Father loved him. Those whom God loves as a Father may despise the hatred of all the world. 2. That he abode in his Father's love, *v.* 10. He continually loved his Father, and was beloved of him. Even when he was made sin and a curse for us, and *it pleased the Lord to bruise him,* yet he abode in his Father's love. See Ps. lxxxix. 33. Because he continued to love his Father, he went cheerfully through his sufferings, and therefore his Father continued to love him. 3. That therefore he abode in his Father's love because he kept his Father's law: *I have kept my Father's commandments,* as Mediator, and so *abide in his love.* Hereby he showed that he continued to love his Father, that he went on, and went through, with his undertaking, and therefore the Father continued to love him. His soul *delighted in him,* because he *did not fail, nor was discouraged,* Isa. xlii. 1—4. We having broken the law of creation, and thereby thrown ourselves out of the love of God; Christ satisfied for us by obeying the law of redemption, and so he abode in his love, and restored us to it.

II. Concerning his own love to his disciples. Though he leaves them, he loves them. And observe here,

1. The pattern of this love: *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.* A strange expression of the condescending grace of Christ! As the Father loved him, who was most worthy, he loved them, who were most unworthy. The Father loved him as his Son, and he loves them as his children. *The Father gave all things into his hand;* so, with himself, *he freely giveth us all things.* The Father loved him as Mediator, as head of the church, and the great trustee of divine grace and favour, which he had not for himself only, but for the benefit of those for whom he was entrusted; and, says he, "I have been a faithful trustee. As the Father has committed his love to me, so I transmit it to you." Therefore the Father was well pleased with him, that he might be well pleased with us in him; and loved him, that in him, as beloved, he might *make us accepted,* Eph. i. 6.

2. The proofs and products of this love, which are four:—

(1.) Christ loved his disciples, for he laid down his life for them (*v.* 13): *Greater* proof of *love hath no man* to show *than this,* to *lay down his life for his friend.* And this is the love wherewith *Christ hath loved us,* he is our ἀντίψυχος—*bail for us,* body for body, life for life, though he knew our insolvency, and foresaw how much the engagement would cost him. Observe here, [1.] The extent of the love of the children of men to one another. The highest proof of it is laying down one's life for a friend, to save his life, and perhaps there have been some such heroic

achievements of love, more than *plucking out one's own eyes*, Gal. iv. 15. If *all that a man has he will give for his life*, he that gives this for his friend gives all, and can give no more; this may sometimes be our duty, 1 John iii. 16. Paul was ambitious of the honour (Phil. ii. 17); and *for a good man some will even dare to die*, Rom. v. 7. It is love in the highest degree, which is *strong as death.* [2.] The excellency of the love of Christ beyond all other love. He has not only equalled, but exceeded, the most illustrious lovers. Others have laid down their lives, content that they should be taken from them; but Christ gave up his, was not merely passive, but made it his own act and deed. The life which others have laid down has been but of equal value with the life for which it was laid down, and perhaps less valuable; but Christ is infinitely more worth than ten thousand of us. Others have thus laid down their lives for their friends, but Christ laid down his for us *when we were enemies*, Rom. v. 8, 10. *Plusquam ferrea aut lapidea corda esse oportet, quæ non emolliet tam incomparabilis divini amoris suavitas—Those hearts must be harder than iron or stone which are not softened by such incomparable sweetness of divine love.*—Calvin.

(2.) Christ loved his disciples, for he took them into a covenant of friendship with himself, *v.* 14, 15. "If you approve yourselves by your obedience my disciples indeed, *you are my friends*, and shall be treated as friends." Note, The followers of Christ are the friends of Christ, and he is graciously pleased to call and account them so. Those that do the duty of his servants are admitted and advanced to the dignity of his friends. David had one servant in his court, and Solomon one in his, that was in a particular manner *the king's friend* (2 Sam. xv. 37; 1 Kings iv. 5); but this honour have all Christ's servants. We may in some particular instance befriend a stranger; but we espouse all the interests of a friend, and concern ourselves in all his cares: thus Christ takes believers to be his friends. He visits them and converses with them as his friends, bears with them and makes the best of them, is afflicted in their afflictions, and takes pleasure in their prosperity; he pleads for them in heaven and takes care of all their interests there. Have friends but one soul? He that is joined to the Lord is *one spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Though they often show themselves unfriendly, he is a friend that loves at all times. Observe how endearingly this is expressed here. [1.] He will not *call them servants*, though they call him *Master* and *Lord.* Those that would be like Christ in humility must not take a pride in insisting upon all occasions on their authority and superiority, but remember that their servants are their fellow-servants. But, [2.] He will *call them his friends;* he will not only love them, but will let them know it; for *in his tongue is the law of kindness.* After his resurrection he seems to speak with more affectionate tenderness of and to his disciples than before. *Go to my brethren, ch.* xx. 17. *Children, have you any meat? ch.* xxi. 5. But observe, though Christ called *them his friends*, they called themselves *his servants:* Peter, *a servant of Christ* (1 Pet. i. 1), and so James, *ch.* i. 1. The more honour Christ puts upon us, the more honour we should study to do him; the higher in his eyes, the lower in our own.

(3.) Christ loved his disciples, for he was very free in communicating his mind to them (*v.* 15): "Henceforth you shall not be kept so much in the dark as you have been, like *servants* that are only told their present work; but, when the Spirit is poured out, you shall know your Master's designs as *friends. All things that I have heard of my Father I have declared unto you.*" As to the secret will of God, there are many things which we must be content not to know; but, as to the revealed will of God, Jesus Christ has faithfully handed to us what he received of the Father, *ch.* i. 18; Matt. xi. 27. The great things relating to man's redemption Christ declared to his disciples, that they might declare them to others; they were the men of his counsel, Matt. xiii. 11.

(4.) Christ loved his disciples, for he chose and ordained them to be the prime instruments of his glory and honour in the world (*v.* 16): *I have chosen you, and ordained you,* His love to them appeared,

[1.] In their election, their election to their apostleship (*ch.* vi. 70): *I have chosen you twelve.* It did not begin on their side: *You have not chosen me*, but I first *chose you.* Why were they admitted to such an intimacy with him, employed in such an embassy for him, and endued with such power from on high? It was not owing to their wisdom and goodness in choosing him for their Master, but to his favour and grace in choosing them for his disciples. It is fit that Christ should have the choosing of his own ministers; still he does it by his providence and Spirit. Though ministers make that holy calling their own choice, Christ's choice is prior to theirs and directs and determines it. Of all that are chosen to grace and glory it may be said, They have not chosen Christ, but he has chosen them, Deut. vii. 7, 8.

[2.] In their ordination: *I have ordained you;* ἔθηκα ὑμᾶς—"*I have put you* into the ministry (1 Tim. i. 12), put you into commission." By this it appeared that he took them for his friends when he crowned their heads with such an honour, and filled their hands with such a trust. It was a mighty confidence he reposed in them, when he made them his ambassadors to negociate the affairs of his kingdom in this lower world, and the prime ministers of state in the administration of it. The treasure of the gospel was committed to them, *First*, That it might be propagated: that you should go, ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑπάγητε—"*that you should go as under a yoke* or burden, for

the ministry is a work, and you that go about it must resolve to undergo a great deal; *that you may go* from place to place all the world over, and *bring forth fruit.*" They were ordained, not to sit still, but to go about, to be diligent in their work, and to lay out themselves unweariedly in doing good. They were ordained, not to beat the air, but to be instrumental in God's hand for the bringing of nations into obedience to Christ, Rom. i.13. Note, Those whom Christ ordains should and shall be fruitful; should labour, and shall not labour in vain. *Secondly,* That it might be perpetuated; that the fruit may remain, that the good effect of their labours may continue in the world from generation to generation, to the end of time. The church of Christ was not to be a short-lived thing, as many of the sects of the philosophers, that were a nine days' wonder; it did not *come up in a night,* nor should it *perish in a night,* but be as the days of heaven. The sermons and writings of the apostles are transmitted to us, and we at this day are built upon that foundation, ever since the Christian church was first founded by the ministry of the apostles and seventy disciples; as one generation of ministers and Christians has passed away, still another has come. By virtue of that great charter (Matt. xxviii. 19), Christ has a church in the world, which, as our lawyers say of bodies corporate, does *not die,* but lives in a succession; and thus *their fruit remains* to this day, and shall do while the earth remains.

[3.] His love to them appeared in the interest they had at the throne of grace: *Whatsoever you shall ask of my Father, in my name, he will give it you.* Probably this refers in the first place to the power of working miracles which the apostles were clothed with, which was to be drawn out by prayer. "Whatever gifts are necessary to the furtherance of your labours, whatever help from heaven you have occasion for at any time, it is but ask and have." Three things are here hinted to us for our encouragement in prayer, and very encouraging they are. *First,* That we have a God to go to who is a Father; Christ here calls him *the Father,* both mine and yours; and the Spirit in the word and in the heart teaches us to cry, *Abba, Father. Secondly,* That we come in a good name. Whatever errand we come upon to the throne of grace according to God's will, we may with a humble boldness mention Christ's name in it, and plead that we are related to him, and he is concerned for us. *Thirdly,* That an answer of peace is promised us. What you come for shall be given you. This great promise made to that great duty keeps up a comfortable and gainful intercourse between heaven and earth.

III. Concerning the disciples' love to Christ, enjoined in consideration of the great love wherewith he had loved them. Three things he exhorts them to:—

1. To continue in his love, *v.* 9. "Continue in your love to me, and in mine to you." Both may be taken in. We must place our happiness in the continuance of Christ's love to us, and make it our business to give continued proofs of our love to Christ, that nothing may tempt us to withdraw from him, or provoke him to withdraw from us. Note, All that love Christ should continue in their love to him, that is, be always loving him, and taking all occasions to show it, and love to the end. The disciples were to go out upon service for Christ, in which they would meet with many troubles; but, says Christ, "*Continue in my love.* Keep up your love to me, and then all the troubles you meet with will be easy; love made seven years' hard service easy to Jacob. Let not the troubles you meet with for Christ's sake quench your love to Christ, but rather quicken it.

2. To let his joy remain in them, and fill them, *v.* 11. This he designed in those precepts and promises given them.

(1.) That his joy might remain in them. The words are so placed, in the original, that they may be read either, [1.] That *my joy in you may remain.* If they bring forth much fruit, and continue in his love, he will continue to rejoice in them as he had done. Note, Fruitful and faithful disciples are the joy of the Lord Jesus; he *rests in his love* to them, Zeph. iii. 17. As there is a transport of joy in heaven in the conversion of sinners, so there is a remaining joy in the perseverance of saints. Or, [2.] That *my joy,* that is, your joy in me, *may remain.* It is the will of Christ that his disciples should constantly and continually rejoice in him, Phil. iv. 4. The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, but the joy of those who abide in Christ's love is a continual feast. The word of the Lord enduring for ever, the joys that flow from it, and are founded on it, do so too.

(2.) *That your joy might be full;* not only that you might be full of joy, but that your joy in me and in my love may rise higher and higher, till it come to perfection, when you *enter into the joy of your Lord.*" Note, [1.] Those and those only that have Christ's joy remaining in them have their joy full; worldly joys are empty, soon surfeit but never satisfy. It is only wisdom's joy that will fill the soul, Ps. xxxvi. 8. [2.] The design of Christ in his word is to *fill the joy* of his people; see 1 John i. 4. This and the other he hath said, that our joy might be fuller and fuller, and perfect at last.

3. To evidence their love to him by keeping his commandments: "*If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love, v.* 10. This will be an evidence of the fidelity and constancy of your love to me, and then you may be sure of the continuance of my love to you." Observe here, (1.) The promise: "*You shall abide in my love* as in a dwelling place, at home in Christ's love; as in a resting place, at ease in Christ's love; as in a strong-

hold, safe in it. *You shall abide in my love,* you shall have grace and strength to persevere in loving me." If the same hand that first shed abroad the love of Christ in our hearts did not keep us in that love, we should not long abide in it, but, through the love of the world, should go *out of love* with Christ himself. (2.) The condition of the promise: *If you keep my commandments.* The disciples were to keep Christ's commandments, not only by a constant conformity to them themselves, but by a faithful delivery of them to others; they were to keep them as trustees, in whose hands that great *depositum* was lodged, for they were to *teach all things that Christ had commanded,* Matt. xxviii. 20. *This commandment* they must *keep without spot* (1 Tim. vi. 14), and thus they must show that they abide in his love.

To induce them to keep his commandments, he urges, [1.] His own example: *As I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.* Christ submitted to the law of mediation, and so preserved the honour and comfort of it, to teach us to submit to the laws of the Mediator, for we cannot otherwise preserve the honour and comfort of our relation to him. [2.] The necessity of it to their interest in him (*v.* 14): "*You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you* and not otherwise." Note, *First,* Those only will be accounted Christ's faithful friends that approve themselves his obedient servants; for those that will not have him to reign over them shall be treated as his enemies. *Idem velle et idem nolle ea demum vera est amicitia—Friendship involves a fellowship of aversions and attachments.*—Sallust. *Secondly,* It is universal obedience to Christ that is the only acceptable obedience; to obey him in every thing that he commands us, not *excepting,* much less *excepting against,* any command.

IV. Concerning the *disciples' love one to another,* enjoined as an evidence of their love to Christ, and a grateful return for his love to them. We must keep his commandments, and this is his commandment, that we *love one another,* *v.* 12, and again, *v.* 17. No one duty of religion is more frequently inculcated, nor more pathetically urged upon us, by our Lord Jesus, than that of mutual love, and for good reason. 1. It is here recommended by Christ's pattern (*v.* 12): *as I have loved you.* Christ's love to us should direct and engage our love to each other; in this manner, and from this motive, we should love one another, as, and because, Christ has loved us. He here specifies some of the expressions of his love to them; he called them friends, communicated his mind to them, was ready to give them what they asked. *Go you and do likewise.* 2. It is required by his precept. He interposes his authority, has made it one of the statute-laws of his kingdom. Observe how differently it is expressed in these two verses, and both very emphatic. (1.) *This is my commandment* (*v.* 12), as if this were the most necessary of all the commandments. As under the law the prohibition of idolatry was the commandment more insisted on than any other, foreseeing the people's addictedness to that sin, so Christ, foreseeing the addictedness of the Christian church to uncharitableness, has laid most stress upon this precept. (2.) *These things I command you,* *v.* 17. He speaks as if he were about to give them many things in charge, and yet names this only, *that you love one another;* not only because this includes many duties, but because it will have a good influence upon all.

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also. 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. 23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But *this cometh to pass,* that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

Here Christ discourses concerning *hatred,* which is the character and genius of the devil's kingdom, as love is of the kingdom of Christ. Observe here,

I. Who they are in whom this hatred is found—the world, the children of this world, as distinguished from the children of God; those who are in the interests of the god of this world, whose image they bear, and whose power they are subject to; all those, whether Jews or Gentiles, who would not come into the church of Christ, which he audibly called, and visibly separates from this evil world. The calling of these *the world* intimates, 1. Their number; there were a world of people that opposed Christ and Christianity. Lord, how were they increased that troubled the Son of David! I fear, if we should put it to the vote between Christ and Satan, Satan

would out-poll us quite. 2. Their confederacy and combination; these numerous hosts are embodied, and are as one, Ps. lxxxiii. 5. Jews and Gentiles, that could agree in nothing else, agreed to persecute Christ's ministers. 3. Their spirit and disposition; they are *men of the world* (Ps. xvii. 13, 14), wholly devoted to this world and the things of it, and never thinking of another world. The people of God, though they are taught to hate the sins of sinners, yet not their persons, but to love and do good to all men. A malicious, spiteful, envious spirit, is not the spirit of Christ, but of the world.

II. Who they are against whom this hatred is levelled—against the disciples of Christ, against Christ himself, and against the Father.

1. The world hates the disciples of Christ: *The world hateth you* (*v.* 19); and he speaks of it as that which they must expect and count upon, *v.* 18, as 1 John iii. 13.

(1.) Observe how this comes in here. [1.] Christ had expressed the great kindness he had for them as friends; but, lest they should be puffed up with this, there was given them, as there was to Paul, a *thorn in the flesh*, that is, as it is explained there, reproaches and persecutions for Christ's sake, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 10. [2.] He had appointed them their work, but tells them what hardships they should meet with in it, that it might not be a surprise to them, and that they might prepare accordingly. [3.] He had charged them to *love one another*, and need enough they had to love one another, for the world would hate them; to be kind to one another, for they would have a great deal of unkindness and ill-will from those that were without. "Keep peace among yourselves, and this will fortify you against the world's quarrels with you." Those that are in the midst of enemies are concerned to hold together.

(2.) Observe what is here included.

[1.] The world's enmity against the followers of Christ: it *hateth them.* Note, Whom Christ blesseth the world curseth. The favourites and heirs of heaven have never been the darlings of this world, since the old enmity was put between the seed of the woman and of the serpent. Why did Cain hate Abel, but *because his works were righteous?* Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing; Joseph's brethren hated him because his father loved him; Saul hated David because *the Lord was with him;* Ahab hated Micaiah because of his prophecies; such are the causeless causes of the world's hatred.

[2.] The fruits of that enmity, two of which we have here, *v.* 20. *First,* They will persecute you, because they hate you, for hatred is a restless passion. It is the common lot of those who will live godly in Christ Jesus to *suffer persecution,* 2 Tim. iii. 12. Christ foresaw what ill usage his ambassadors would meet with in the world, and yet, for the sake of those few that by their ministry were to be called out of the world, he sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. *Secondly,* Another fruit of their enmity is implied, that they would reject their doctrine. When Christ says, *If they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours,* he means, They will keep yours, and regard yours, no more than they have regarded and kept mine. Note, The preachers of the gospel cannot but take the despising of their message to be the greatest injury that can be done to themselves; as it was a great affront to Jeremiah to say, *Let us not give heed to any of his words,* Jer. xviii. 18.

[3.] The causes of that enmity. The world will hate them,

First, Because they do not belong to it (*v.* 19): "*If you were of the world,* of its spirit, and in its interests, if you were carnal and worldly, *the world would love you* as its own; but, because you are called out of the world, it hates you, and ever will." Note, 1. We are not to wonder if those that are devoted to the world are caressed by it as its friends; most men *bless the covetous,* Ps. x. 3; xlix. 18. 2. Nor are we to wonder if those that are delivered from the world are maligned by it as its enemies; when Israel is rescued out of Egypt, the Egyptians will pursue them. Observe, The reason why Christ's disciples are not of the world is not because they have by their own wisdom and virtue distinguished themselves from the world, but because Christ hath chosen them out of it, to set them apart for himself; and this is the reason why the world hates them; for, (1.) The glory which by virtue of this choice they are designed for sets them above the world, and so makes them the objects of its envy. The saints shall judge the world, and the upright have dominion, and therefore they are hated. (2.) The grace which by virtue of this choice they are endued with sets them against the world; they swim against the stream of the world, and are not conformed to it; they witness against it, and are not conformed to it. This would support them under all the calamities which the world's hatred would bring upon them, that they were hated because they were the choice and the chosen ones of the Lord Jesus, and were not of the world. Now, [1.] This was no just cause for the world's hatred of them. If we do any thing to make ourselves hateful, we have reason to lament it; but, if men hate us for that for which they should love and value us, we have reason to pity them, but no reason to perplex ourselves. Nay, [2.] This was just cause for their own joy. He that is hated because he is rich and prospers cares not who has the vexation of it, while he has the satisfaction of it.

> ——Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo
> Ipse domi——
>
> ——Let them hiss on, he cries,
> While in my own opinion fully blessed.
>
> *Timon in Hor.*

Much more may those hug themselves whom the world hates, but whom Christ loves.

Secondly, "Another cause of the world's hating you will be because you do belong to Christ (*v.* 21): *For my name's sake.*" Here is the core of the controversy; whatever is pretended, this is the ground of the quarrel, they hate Christ's disciples because they *bear his name,* and *bear up his name* in the world. Note, 1. It is the character of Christ's disciples that they stand up for his name. The name into which they were baptized is that which they will live and die by. 2. It has commonly been the lot of those that appear for Christ's name to suffer for so doing, to suffer many things, and hard things, *all these things.* It is matter of comfort to the greatest sufferers if they suffer for Christ's name's sake. *If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you* (1 Pet. iv. 14), happy indeed, considering not only the honour that is imprinted upon those sufferings (Acts v. 41), but the comfort that is infused into them, and especially the crown of glory which those sufferings lead to. *If we suffer with Christ,* and for Christ, *we shall reign with him.*

Thirdly, After all, it is the world's ignorance that is the true cause of its enmity to the disciples of Christ (*v.* 21): *Because they know not him that sent me.* 1. They know not God. If men had but a due acquaintance with the very first principles of natural religion, and did but know God, though they did not embrace Christianity, yet they could not hate and persecute it. Those have no knowledge who eat up God's people, Ps. xiv. 4. 2. They know not God as he that sent our Lord Jesus, and authorized him to be the great Mediator of the peace. We do not rightly know God if we do not know him in Christ, and those who persecute those whom he sends make it to appear that they know not that he was sent of God. See 1 Cor. ii. 8.

2. The world hates Christ himself. And this is spoken of here for two ends:—

(1.) To mitigate the trouble of his followers, arising from the world's hatred, and to make it the less strange, and the less grievous (*v.* 18): *You know that it hated me before you,* πρῶτον ὑμῶν. We read it as signifying priority of time; he began in the bitter cup of suffering, and then left us to pledge him; but it may be read as expressing his superiority over them: "*You know* that it hated me, *your first,* your chief and captain, your leader and commander." [1.] If Christ, who excelled in goodness, and was perfectly innocent and universally beneficent, was hated, can we expect that any virtue or merit of ours should screen us from malice? [2.] If our Master, the founder of our religion, met with so much opposition in the planting of it, his servants and followers can look for no other in propagating and professing it. For this he refers them (*v.* 20) to his own word, at their admission into discipleship: *Remember the word that I said unto you.* It would help us to understand Christ's latter sayings to compare them with his former sayings. Nor would any thing contribute more to the making of us easy than remembering the words of Christ, which will expound his providences. Now in this word there is, *First,* A plain truth: *The servant is not greater than his Lord.* This he had said to them, Matt. x. 24. Christ is our Lord, and therefore we must diligently attend all his motions, and patiently acquiesce in all his disposals, for the servant is inferior to his lord. The plainest truths are sometimes the strongest arguments for the hardest duties; Elihu answers a multitude of Job's murmurings with this one self-evident truth, that God is greater than man, Job xxxiii. 12. So here is, *Secondly,* A proper inference drawn from it: "*If they have persecuted me,* as you have seen, and are likely to see much more, *they will also persecute you;* you may expect it and count upon it: for," 1. "You will do the same that I have done to provoke them; you will reprove them for their sins, and call them to repentance, and give them strict rules of holy living, which they will not bear." 2. "You cannot do more than I have done to oblige them; after so great an instance, let none wonder if they suffer ill for doing well." He adds, "*If they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours also;* as there have been a few, and but a few, that have been wrought upon by my preaching, so there will be by yours a few, and but a few." Some give another sense of this, making ἐτήρησαν to be put for παρητήρησαν. "If they have lain in wait for my sayings, with a design to ensnare me, they will in like manner lie in wait to entangle you in your talk."

(2.) To aggravate the wickedness of this unbelieving world, and to discover its exceeding sinfulness; to hate and persecute the apostles was bad enough, but in them to hate and persecute Christ himself was much worse. The world is generally in an ill name in scripture, and nothing can put it into a worse name than this, that it hated Jesus Christ. There is a world of people that are haters of Christ. Two things he insists upon to aggravate the wickedness of those that hated him:—

[1.] That there was the greatest reason imaginable why they should love him; men's good words and good works usually recommend them; now as to Christ,

First, His words were such as merited their love (*v.* 22): "*If I had not spoken unto them,* to court their love, *they had not had sin,* their opposition had not amounted to a hatred of me, their sin had been comparatively no sin. But now that I have said so much to them to recommend myself to their best affections they have no pretence, no excuse for their sin." Observe here, 1. The advantage which those have that enjoy the gospel; Christ in it comes and speaks to them; he spoke in person to the men of that generation, and is still speaking to us by our Bibles and ministers, and as one that has the most unquestionable authority over us, and affection for

us. Every word of his is pure, carries with it a commanding majesty, and yet a condescending tenderness, able, one would think, to charm the deafest adder. 2. The excuse which those have that enjoy not the gospel: "*If I had not spoken to them,* if they had never heard of Christ and of salvation by him, *they had not had sin.*" (1.) Not this kind of sin. They had not been chargeable with a contempt of Christ if he had not come and made a tender of his grace to them. As *sin is not imputed where there is no law,* so unbelief is not imputed where there is no gospel; and, where it is imputed, it is thus far the only damning sin, that, being a sin against the remedy, other sins would not damn if the guilt of them were not bound on with this. (2.) Not such a degree of sin. If they had not had the gospel among them, their other sins had not been so bad; for the *times of ignorance God winked at,* Luke xii. 47, 48. 3. The aggravated guilt which those lie under to whom Christ has *come and spoken in vain,* whom he has called and invited in vain, with whom he has reasoned and pleaded in vain; *They have no cloak for their sin;* they are altogether inexcusable, and in the judgment day will be speechless, and will not have a word to say for themselves. Note, The clearer and fuller the discoveries are which are made to us of the grace and truth of Jesus Christ, the more is said to us that is convincing and endearing, the greater is our sin if we do not love him and believe in him. The word of Christ strips sin of its cloak, that it may appear sin.

Secondly, His works were such as merited their love, as well as his words (*v.* 24): "*If I had not done among them,* in their country, and before their eyes, such works as *no other man ever did, they had not had sin;* their unbelief and enmity had been excusable, and they might have had some colour to say that my word was not to be credited, if not otherwise confirmed;" but he produced satisfactory proofs of his divine mission, *works which no other man did.* Note, 1. As the Creator demonstrates his power and Godhead by his works (Rom. i. 20), so doth the Redeemer. His miracles, his mercies, works of wonder and works of grace, prove him sent of God, and sent on a kind errand. 2. Christ's works were such as *no man ever did.* No common person that had not a commission from heaven, and God with him, could work miracles, *ch.* iii. 2. And no prophet ever wrought such miracles, so many, so illustrious. Moses and Elias wrought miracles as servants, by a derived power; but Christ, as a Son, by his own power. This was it that amazed the people, that with authority he commanded diseases and devils (Mark i. 27); they owned they never saw the like, Mark ii. 12. They were all good works, works of mercy; and this seems especially intended here, for he is upbraiding them with this, that they hated him. One that was so universally useful, more than ever any man was, one would think, should have been universally beloved, and yet even he is hated. 3. The works of Christ enhance the guilt of sinners' infidelity and enmity to him, to the last degree of wickedness and absurdity. If they had only heard his words, and not seen his works,—if we had only his sermons upon record, and not his miracles, unbelief might have pleaded want of proof; but now it has no excuse. Nay, the rejecting of Christ, both by them and us, has in it the sin, not only of obstinate unbelief, but of base ingratitude. They saw Christ to be most amiable, and studious to do them a kindness; yet they hated him, and studied to do him mischief. And we see in his word that great love wherewith he loved us, and yet are not wrought upon by it.

[2.] That there was no reason at all why they should hate him. Some that at one time will say and do that which is recommending, yet at another time will say and do that which is provoking and disobliging; but our Lord Jesus not only did much to merit men's esteem and good-will, but never did any thing justly to incur their displeasure; this he pleads by quoting a scripture for it (*v.* 25): "*This comes to pass,* this unreasonable hatred of me, and of my disciples for my sake, *that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law*" (that is, in the Old Testament, which is a law, and was received by them as a law), "*They hated me without a cause;*" this David speaks of himself as a type of Christ, Ps. xxxv. 19; lxix. 4. Note, *First,* Those that hate Christ hate him without any just cause; enmity to Christ is unreasonable enmity. We think those deserve to be hated that are haughty and froward, but Christ is meek and lowly, compassionate and tender; those also that under colour of complaisance are malicious, envious, and revengeful, but Christ devoted himself to the service of those that used him, nay, and of those that abused him; toiled for others' ease, and impoverished himself to enrich us. Those we think hateful that are *hurtful to kings and provinces,* and disturbers of the public peace; but Christ, on the contrary, was the greatest blessing imaginable to his country, and yet was hated. He testified indeed that *their works were evil,* with a design to make them good, but to hate him for this cause was to hate him without cause. *Secondly,* Herein the scripture was fulfilled, and the antitype answered the type. Saul and his courtiers hated David without cause, for he had been serviceable to him with his harp, and with his sword; Absalom and his party hated him, though to him he had been an indulgent father, and to them a great benefactor. Thus was the Son of David hated, and hunted most unjustly. Those that hated Christ did not design there in to fulfil the scripture; but God, in permitting it, had that in his eye; and it confirms our faith in

Christ as the Messiah that even this was foretold concerning him, and, being foretold, was accomplished in him. And we must not think it strange or hard if it have a further accomplishment in us. We are apt to justify our complaints of injuries done us with this, that they are causeless, whereas the more they are so the more they are like the sufferings of Christ, and may be the more easily borne.

3. In Christ the world hates God himself; this is twice said here (*v.* 23): *He that hateth me*, though he thinks his hatred goes no further, yet really he *hates my Father also.* And again, *v.* 24, They have *seen and hated both me and my Father.* Note, (1.) There are those that hate God, notwithstanding the beauty of his nature and the bounty of his providence; they are enraged at his justice, as the devils that believe it and tremble, are vexed at his dominion, and would gladly *break his bands asunder.* Those who cannot bring themselves to deny that there is a God, and yet wish there were none, they see and hate him. (2.) Hatred of Christ will be construed and adjudged hatred of God, for he is in his person his Father's express image, and in his office his great agent and ambassador. God will have all men to honour the Son as they honour the Father, and therefore what entertainment the Son has, that the Father has. Hence it is easy to infer that those who are enemies to the Christian religion, however they may cry up natural religion, are really enemies to all religion. Deists are in effect atheists, and those that ridicule the light of the gospel would, if they could, extinguish even natural light, and shake off all obligations of conscience and the fear of God. Let an unbelieving malignant world know that their enmity to the gospel of Christ will be looked upon in the great day as an enmity to the blessed God himself; and let all that suffer for righteousness' sake, according to the will of God, take comfort from this; if God himself be hated in them, and struck at through him, they need not be either ashamed of their cause or afraid of the issue.

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: 27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Christ having spoken of the great opposition which his gospel was likely to meet with in the world, and the hardships that would be put upon the preachers of it, lest any should fear that they and it would be run down by that violent torrent, he here intimates to all those that were well-wishers to his cause and interest what effectual provision was made for supporting it, both by the principal testimony of the Spirit (*v.* 26), and the subordinate testimony of the apostles (*v.* 27), and testimonies are the proper supports of truth.

I. It is here promised that the blessed Spirit shall maintain the cause of Christ in the world, notwithstanding the opposition it should meet with. Christ, when he was reviled, committed his injured cause to his Father, and did not lose by his silence, for the Comforter came, pleaded it powerfully, and carried it triumphantly. "*When the Comforter* or Advocate *is come, who proceedeth from the Father,* and *whom I will send* to supply the want of my bodily presence, *he shall testify of me* against those that *hate me without cause.*" We have more in this verse concerning the Holy Ghost than in any one verse besides in the Bible; and, being baptized into his name, we are concerned to acquaint ourselves with him as far as he is revealed.

1. Here is an account of him in his essence, or subsistence rather. He is *the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father.* Here, (1.) He is spoken of as a distinct person; not a quality or property, but a person under the proper name of a *Spirit,* and proper title of the *Spirit of truth,* a title fitly given him where he is brought in testifying. (2.) As a divine person, that *proceedeth from the Father,* by out-goings that were of old, *from everlasting.* The spirit or breath of man, called the *breath of life,* proceeds from the man, and by it modified he delivers his mind, by it invigorated he sometimes exerts his strength to *blow out* what he would extinguish, and *blow up* what he would excite. Thus the blessed Spirit is the emanation of divine light, and the energy of divine power. The rays of the sun, by which it dispenses and diffuses its light, heat, and influence, proceed from the sun, and yet are one with it. The *Nicene* Creed says, The Spirit *proceedeth from the Father and the Son,* for he is called the *Spirit of the Son,* Gal. iv. 6. And the Son is here said to *send him.* The Greek church choose rather to say, *from the Father by the Son.*

2. In his mission. (1.) He will come in a more plentiful effusion of his gifts, graces, and powers, than had ever yet been. Christ had been long the ὁ ἐρχόμενος—*he that should come;* now the blessed Spirit is so. (2.) *I will send him to you from the Father.* He had said (*ch.* xiv. 16), *I will pray the Father, and he shall send you the Comforter,* which bespeaks the Spirit to be the fruit of the intercession Christ makes within the veil: here he says, *I will send him,* which bespeaks him to be the fruit of his dominion within the veil. The Spirit was sent, [1.] By Christ as Mediator, now *ascended on high* to *give gifts unto men,* and all power being given to him. [2.] From the Father: "Not only from heaven, my Father's house" (the Spirit was given in a *sound from heaven,* Acts ii. 2), "but according to my Father's will and appointment, and with his concurring power

and authority." [3.] To the apostles to instruct them in their preaching, enable them for working, and carry them through their sufferings. He was given to them and their successors, both in Christianity and in the ministry; to them and their seed, and their seed's seed, according to that promise, Isa. lix. 21.

3. In his office and operations, which are two:—(1.) One implied in the title given to him; he is the *Comforter*, or *Advocate*. An advocate for Christ, to maintain his cause against the world's infidelity, a comforter to the saints against the world's hatred. (2.) Another expressed: *He shall testify of me.* He is not only an advocate, but a witness for Jesus Christ; he is one of the three that *bear record in heaven*, and the first of the three that *bear witness on earth*, 1 John v. 7, 8. He instructed the apostles, and enabled them to work miracles; he indited the scriptures, which are the standing witnesses that *testify of Christ*, *ch.* v. 39. The power of the ministry is derived from the Spirit, for he qualifies ministers; and the power of Christianity too, for he sanctifies Christians, and in both testifies of Christ.

II. It is here promised that the apostles also, by the Spirit's assistance, should have the honour of being Christ's witnesses (*v.* 27): *And you also shall bear witness* of me, being competent witnesses, for *you have been with* me from the beginning of my ministry. Observe here,

1. That the apostles were appointed to be witnesses for Christ in the world. When he had said, *The Spirit shall testify*, he adds, *And you also shall bear witness.* Note, The Spirit's working is not to supersede, but to engage and encourage ours. Though the Spirit testify, ministers also must bear their testimony, and people attend to it; for the Spirit of grace witnesses and works by the means of grace. The apostles were the first witnesses that were called in the famous trial between Christ and the prince of this world, which issued in the ejectment of the intruder. This intimates, (1.) The work cut out for them; they were to attest the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, concerning Christ, for the recovering of his just right, and the maintaining of his crown and dignity. Though Christ's disciples fled when they should have been witnesses for him upon his trial before the high priest and Pilate, yet after the Spirit was poured out upon them they appeared courageous in vindication of the cause of Christ against the accusations it was loaded with. The truth of the Christian religion was to be proved very much by the evidence of matter of fact, especially Christ's resurrection, of which the apostles were in a particular manner chosen witnesses (Acts x. 41), and they bore their testimony accordingly, Acts iii. 15; v. 32. Christ's ministers are his witnesses. (2.) The honour put upon them hereby—that they should be *workers together with God.* "The *Spirit shall testify of me*, and you also, under the conduct of the Spirit, and in concurrence with the Spirit (who will preserve you from mistaking in that which you relate on your own knowledge, and will inform you of that which you cannot know but by revelation), *shall bear witness.*" This might encourage them against the hatred and contempt of the world, that Christ had honoured them, and would own them.

2. That they were qualified to be so: *You have been with me from the beginning.* They not only heard his public sermons, but had constant private converse with him. He *went about doing good*, and, while others saw the wonderful and merciful works that he did in their own town and country only, those that went about with him were witnesses of them all. They had likewise opportunity of observing the unspotted purity of his conversation, and could witness for him that they never saw in him, nor heard from him, any thing that had the least tincture of human frailty. Note. (1.) We have great reason to receive the record which the apostles gave of Christ, for they did not speak by hearsay, but what they had the greatest assurance of imaginable, 2 Pet. i. 16; 1 John i. 1, 3. (2.) Those are best able to bear witness for Christ that have themselves been with him, by faith, hope, and love, and by living a life of communion with God in him. Ministers must first learn Christ, and then preach him. Those speak best of the things of God that speak experimentally. It is particularly a great advantage to have been acquainted with Christ *from the beginning*, to understand all things from the *very first*, Luke i. 3. To have been with him from the beginning of our days. An early acquaintance and constant converse with the gospel of Christ will make a man like a good householder.

CHAP. XVI.

Among other glorious things God hath spoken of himself this is one, I wound, and I heal, Deut. 32, 39. Christ's discourse in this chapter, which continues and concludes his farewell sermon to his disciples, does so. I. Here are wounding words in the notice he gives them of the troubles that were before them, ver. 1—6. II. Here are healing words in the comforts he administers to them for their support under those troubles, which are five:—1. That he would send them the Comforter, ver. 7—15. 2. That he would visit them again at his resurrection, ver. 16—22. 3. That he would secure to them an answer of peace to all their prayers, ver. 23—27. 4. That he was now but returning to his Father, ver. 28—32. 5. That, whatever troubles they might meet with in this world, by virtue of his victory over it they should be sure of peace in him, ver. 33.

THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. 2 They shall put you out of the synagogue: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. 3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. 4 But these things have I told you, that when the time

shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. 5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? 6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Christ dealt faithfully with his disciples when he sent them forth on his errands, for he told them the worst of it, that they might sit down and count the cost. He had told them in the chapter before to expect the world's hatred; now here in these verses,

I. He gives them a reason why he alarmed them thus with the expectation of trouble: *These things have I spoken unto you, that you should not be offended,* or *scandalized, v.* 1. 1. The disciples of Christ are apt to be offended at the cross; and the offence of the cross is a dangerous temptation, even to good men, to turn back from the ways of God, or turn aside out of them, or drive on heavily in them; to quit either their integrity or their comfort. It is not for nothing that a suffering time is called *an hour of temptation.* 2. Our Lord Jesus, by giving us notice of trouble, designed to take off the terror of it, that it might not be a surprise to us. Of all the adversaries of our peace, in this world of troubles, none insult us more violently, nor put our troops more into disorder, than disappointment does; but we can easily welcome a guest we expect, and *being forewarned are fore-armed—Præmoniti, præmuniti.*

II. He foretels particularly what they should suffer (*v.* 2): "Those that have power to do it shall *put you out of their synagogues;* and this is not the worst, *they shall kill you.*" *Ecce duo gladii—Behold two swords* drawn against the followers of the Lord Jesus.

1. The sword of ecclesiastical censure; this is drawn against them by the Jews, for they were the only pretenders to church-power. They shall *cast you out of their synagogues;* ἀποσυναγώγους ποιήσουσιν ὑμᾶς—*they shall make you excommunicates.* (1.) "They shall cast you out of the particular synagogues you were members of." At first, they scourged them in their synagogues as contemners of the law (Matt. x. 17), and at length cast them out as incorrigible. (2.) "They shall cast you out of the congregation of Israel in general, the national church of the Jews; shall debar you from the privileges of that, put you into the condition of an outlaw," *qui caput gerit lupinum—to be knocked on the head, like another wolf;* "they will look upon you as Samaritans, as heathen men and publicans." *Interdico tibi aqua et igne—I forbid you the use of water and fire.* And were it not for the penalties, forfeitures, and incapacities, incurred hereby, it would be no injury to be thus driven out of a house infected and falling. Note, It has often been the lot of Christ's disciples to be unjustly excommunicated. Many a good truth has been branded with an anathema, and many a child of God *delivered to Satan.*

2. The sword of civil power: "The time cometh, *the hour is come;* now things are likely to be worse with you than hitherto they have been; when you are expelled as heretics, they will *kill you, and think they do God service,* and others will think so too." (1.) You will find them really cruel: They will *kill you.* Christ's sheep have been accounted as sheep for the slaughter; the twelve apostles (we are told) were all put to death, except John. Christ had said (*ch* 15, 27), You shall *bear witness,* μαρτυρεῖτε—*you shall be martyrs,* shall seal the truth with your blood, your heart's blood. (2.) You will find them *seemingly conscientious;* they will think they do God service; they will seem λατρείαν προσφέρειν—*to offer a good sacrifice* to God; as those that cast out God's servants of old, and said, *Let the Lord be glorified,* Isa. lxvi. 5. Note, [1.] It is possible for those that are real enemies to God's service to pretend a mighty zeal for it. The devil's work has many a time been done in God's livery, and one of the most mischievous enemies Christianity ever had sits *in the temple of God.* Nay, [2.] It is common to patronise an enmity to religion with a colour of duty to God, and service to his church. God's people have suffered the greatest hardships from conscientious persecutors. Paul verily thought he *ought to do* what he did *against the name of Jesus.* This does not at all lessen the sin of the persecutors, for villanies will never be consecrated by putting the name of God to them; but it does enhance the sufferings of the persecuted, to die under the character of being enemies to God; but there will be a resurrection of names as well as of bodies at the great day.

III. He gives them the true reason of the world's enmity and rage against them (*v.* 3): "*These things will they do unto you,* not because you have done them any harm, but *because they have not known the Father, nor me.* Let this comfort you, that none will be your enemies but the worst of men." Note, 1. Many that pretend to know God are wretchedly ignorant of him. Those that pretended to *do him service* thought they knew him, but it was a wrong notion they had of him. Israel transgressed the covenant, and yet cried, *My God, we know thee,* Hos. viii. 1, 2. 2. Those that are ignorant of Christ cannot have any right knowledge of God. In vain do men pretend to know God and religion, while they slight Christ and Christianity. 3. Those are very ignorant indeed of God and Christ that think it an acceptable piece of service to persecute good people. Those that know Christ know that he *came not into the world to destroy men's lives, but to*

save them; that he rules by the power of truth and love, not of fire and sword. Never was such a persecuting church as that which makes *ignorance the mother of devotion.*

IV. He tells them why he gave them notice of this now, and why not sooner.

1. Why he told them of it now (*v.* 4), not to discourage them, or add to their present sorrow; nor did he tell them of their danger that they might contrive how to avoid it, but that, "when *the time shall come* (and you may be sure it will come), you may *remember that I told you.*" Note, When suffering times come it will be of use to us to remember what Christ has told us of sufferings. (1.) That our belief of Christ's foresight and faithfulness may be confirmed; and, (2.) That the trouble may be the less grievous, for we were told of it before, and we took up our profession in expectation of it, so that it ought not to be a surprise to us, nor looked upon as a wrong to us. As Christ in his sufferings, so his followers in theirs, should have an eye to the *fulfilling of the scripture.*

2. Why he did not tell them of it sooner: "*I spoke not this to you from the beginning* when you and I came to be first acquainted, because *I was with you.* (1.) While he was with them, he bore the shock of the world's malice, and stood in the front of the battle; against him the powers of darkness levelled all their force, not against *small or great,* but only against the *king of Israel,* and therefore he did not need then to say so much to them of suffering, because it did not fall much to their share; but we do find that from the beginning he bade them prepare for sufferings; and therefore, (2.) It seems rather to be meant of the promise of *another comforter.* This he had said little of to them *at the beginning,* because he was himself with them to instruct, guide, and comfort them, and then they needed not the promise of the Spirit's extraordinary presence. The children of the bride-chamber would not have so much need of a comforter till the bridegroom should be *taken away.*

V. He expresses a very affectionate concern for the present sadness of his disciples, upon occasion of what he had said to them (*v.* 5, 6): "*Now* I am to be no longer with you, but *go my way to him that sent me,* to repose there, after this fatigue; and *none of you asketh me,* with any courage, *Whither goest thou?* But, instead of enquiring after that which would comfort you, you pore upon that which looks melancholy, and *sorrow has filled your heart.*"

1. He had told them that he was about to leave them: *Now I go my way.* He was not driven away by force, but voluntarily departed; his life was not extorted from him, but deposited by him. He went *to him that sent him,* to give an account of his negociation. Thus, when we depart out of this world, we *go to him that sent us* into it, which should make us all solicitous to live to good purposes, remembering we have a commission to execute, which must be returned at a certain day.

2. He had told them what hard things they must suffer when he was gone, and that they must not expect such an easy quiet life as they had had. Now, if these were the legacies he had to leave to them, who had *left all* for him, they would be tempted to think they had made a sorry bargain of it, and were, for the present, in a consternation about it, in which their Master sympathizes with them, yet blames them, (1.) That they were careless of the means of comfort, and did not stir up themselves to seek it: *None of you asks me, Whither goest thou?* Peter had started this question (*ch.* xiii. 36), and Thomas had seconded it (*ch.* xiv. 5), but they did not pursue it, they did not take the answer; they were in the dark concerning it, and did not enquire further, nor seek for fuller satisfaction; they did not continue seeking, continue knocking. See what a compassionate teacher Christ is, and how condescending to the weak and ignorant. Many a teacher will not endure that the learner should ask the same question twice; if he cannot take a thing quickly, let him go without it; but our Lord Jesus knows how to deal with babes, that must be taught with *precept upon precept.* If the disciples here would have pushed on that enquiry, they would have found that his going away was for his advancement, and therefore his departure from them should not inordinately trouble them (for why should they be against his preferment?) and for their advantage, and therefore their sufferings for him should not inordinately trouble them; for a sight of *Jesus at the right hand of God* would be an effectual support to them, as it was to Stephen. Note, A humble believing enquiry into the design and tendency of the darkest dispensations of Providence would help to reconcile us to them, and to grieve the less, and fear the less, because of them; it will silence us to ask, Whence come they? but will abundantly satisfy us to ask, Whither go they? for we know they *work for good,* Rom. viii. 28.

(2.) That they were too intent, and pored too much, upon the occasions of their grief: *Sorrow has filled their hearts.* Christ had said enough to fill them with joy (*ch.* xv. 11); but by looking at that only which made against them, and overlooking that which made for them, they were so full of sorrow that there was no room left for joy. Note, It is the common fault and folly of melancholy Christians to dwell only upon the dark side of the cloud, to meditate nothing but terror, and turn a deaf ear to *the voice of joy and gladness.* That which filled the disciples' hearts with sorrow, and hindered the operation of the cordials Christ administered, was too great an affection to this present life. They were big with hopes of their Master's external kingdom and glory, and that they should shine and reign with him: and now, instead of that, to hear of nothing but bonds

and afflictions, this filled them with sorrow. Nothing is a greater prejudice to our joy in God than *the love of the world;* and *the sorrow of the world,* the consequence of it.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show *it* unto you.

As it was usual with the Old-Testament prophets to comfort the church in its calamities with the promise of the Messiah (Isa. ix. 6; Mic. v. 6; Zech. iii. 8); so, the Messiah being come, the promise of the Spirit was the great cordial, and is still.

Three things we have here concerning *the Comforter's coming:—*

I. That Christ's departure was absolutely necessary to the Comforter's coming, *v.* 7. The disciples were so loth to believe this that Christ saw cause to assert it with a more than ordinary solemnity: *I tell you the truth.* We may be confident of *the truth* of every thing that Christ has told us; he has no design to impose upon us. Now, to make them easy, he here tells them,

1. In general, *It was expedient for them that he should go away.* This was strange doctrine, but if it was true it was comfortable enough, and showed them how absurd their sorrow was. *It is expedient,* not only for me, but *for you* also, *that I go away;* though they do not see it, and are loth to believe it, so it is. Note, (1.) Those things often seem grievous to us that are really expedient for us; and particularly our going away when we have finished our course. (2.) Our Lord Jesus is always for that which is most expedient for us, whether we think so or no. He deals not with us according to the folly of our own choice, but graciously over-rules it, and gives us the physic we are loth to take, because he knows it is good for us.

2. *It was therefore expedient* because it was in order to the sending of the Spirit. Now observe,

(1.) That Christ's going was in order to the Comforter's coming.

[1.] This is expressed negatively: *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come.* And why not? *First,* So it was settled in the divine counsels concerning this affair, and the measure must not be altered; *shall the earth be forsaken for them?* He that gives freely may recal one gift before he bestows another, while we would fondly hold all. *Secondly,* It is congruous enough that the ambassador extraordinary should be recalled, before the envoy come, that is constantly to reside. *Thirdly,* The sending of the Spirit was to be the fruit of Christ's purchase, and that purchase was to be made by his death, which was his going away. *Fourthly,* It was to be an answer to his intercession within the veil. See *ch.* xiv. 16. Thus must this gift be both paid for, and prayed for, by our Lord Jesus, that we might learn to put the greater value upon it. *Fifthly,* The great argument the Spirit was to use in convincing the world must be Christ's ascension into heaven, and his welcome there. See *v.* 10, and *ch.* vii. 39. *Lastly,* The disciples must be weaned from his bodily presence, which they were too apt to dote upon, before they were duly prepared to receive the spiritual aids and comforts of a new dispensation.

[2.] It is expressed positively: *If I depart I will send him to you;* as though he had said, "Trust me to provide effectually that you shall be no loser by my departure." The glorified Redeemer is not unmindful of his church on earth, nor will ever leave it without its necessary supports. Though he *departs, he sends the Comforter;* nay, he departs on purpose to send him. Thus still, though one generation of ministers and Christians depart, another is raised up in their room, for Christ will maintain his own cause.

(2.) That the presence of Christ's Spirit in his church is so much better, and more desirable, than his bodily presence, that it was really expedient for us that he should go away, to send the Comforter. His corporal presence could be but in one place at one time, but his Spirit is every where, in all places, at all times, wherever *two or three are gathered in his name.* Christ's bodily presence draws men's eyes, his Spirit draws their hearts; that was *the letter* which *kills,* his *Spirit gives life.*

II. That the coming of *the Spirit* was absolutely necessary to the carrying on of Christ's interests on earth (*v.* 8): *And when he is come,* ἐλθὼν ἐκεῖνος. He that is sent is willing of himself to come, and at his first coming he will do this, *he will reprove,* or, as the margin reads it, *he will convince the world,* by your ministry,

concerning *sin, righteousness, and judgment.*

1. See here what the office of the Spirit is, and on what errand he is sent. (1.) To *reprove.* The Spirit, by the word and conscience, is a reprover; ministers are reprovers by office, and by them the Spirit reproves. (2.) To *convince.* It is a law-term, and speaks the office of the judge in summing up the evidence, and setting a matter that has been long canvassed in a clear and true light. He shall *convince,* that is, "He shall put to silence the adversaries of Christ and his cause, by discovering and demonstrating the falsehood and fallacy of that which they have maintained, and the truth and certainty of that which they have opposed." Note, Convincing work is the Spirit's work; he can do it effectually, and none but he; man may open the cause, but it is the Spirit only that can open the heart. The Spirit is called the *Comforter* (*v.* 7), and here it is said, *He shall convince.* One would think this were cold comfort, but it is the method the Spirit takes, first to convince, and then to comfort; first to lay open the wound, and then to apply healing medicines. Or, taking conviction more generally, for a demonstration of what is right, it intimates that the Spirit's comforts are solid, and grounded upon truth.

2. See who they are whom he is to reprove and convince: *The world,* both Jew and Gentile. (1.) He shall give the world the most powerful means of conviction, for the apostles shall go into all the world, backed by the Spirit, to preach the gospel, fully proved. (2.) He shall sufficiently provide for the taking off and silencing of the objections and prejudices of the world against the gospel. Many an infidel was *convinced of all, and judged of all,* 1 Cor. xiv. 24. (3.) He shall effectually and savingly convince many in the world, some in every age, in every place, in order to their conversion to the faith of Christ. Now this was an encouragement to the disciples, in reference to the difficulties they were likely to meet with, [1.] That they should see good done, Satan's kingdom *fall like lightning,* which would be their joy, as it was his. Even this malignant world the Spirit shall work upon; and the conviction of sinners is the comfort of faithful ministers. [2.] That this would be the fruit of their services and sufferings, these should contribute very much to this good work.

3. See what the Spirit shall convince the world of.

(1.) *Of sin* (*v.* 9), *because they believe not on me.* [1.] The Spirit is sent to convince sinners of sin, not barely to tell them of it; in conviction there is more than this; it is to prove it upon them, and force them to own it, as they (*ch.* viii. 9) that were *convicted of their own consciences. Make them to know their abominations.* The Spirit convinces of the fact of sin, that we have done so and so; of the fault of sin, that we have done ill in doing so; of the folly of sin, that we have acted against right reason, and our true interest; of the filth of sin, that by it we are become odious to God; of the fountain of sin, the corrupt nature; and, lastly, of the fruit of sin, that the end thereof is death. The Spirit demonstrates the depravity and degeneracy of the whole world, that all the world is guilty before God. [2.] The Spirit, in conviction, fastens especially upon the sin of unbelief, their not believing in Christ, *First,* As the great reigning sin. There was, and is, a world of people, that believe not in Jesus Christ, and they are not sensible that it is their sin. Natural conscience tells them that murder and theft are sin; but it is a supernatural work of the Spirit to convince them that it is a sin to suspend their belief of the gospel, and to reject the salvation offered by it. Natural religion, after it has given us its best discoveries and directions, lays and leaves us under this further obligation, that whatever divine revelation shall be made to us at any time, with sufficient evidence to prove it divine, we accept it, and submit to it. This law those transgress who, when *God speaketh to us by his Son, refuse him that speaketh;* and therefore it is sin. *Secondly,* As the great ruining sin. Every sin is so in its own nature; no sin is so to them that believe in Christ; so that it is unbelief that damns sinners. It is because of this that they cannot *enter into rest,* that they cannot *escape the wrath of God;* it is a sin against the remedy. *Thirdly,* As that which is at the bottom of all sin; so Calvin takes it. The Spirit shall convince the world that the true reason why sin reigns among them is because they are not by faith united to Christ. *Ne putimus vel guttam unam rectitudinis sine Christo nobis inesse—Let us not suppose that, apart from Christ, we have a drop of rectitude.*—Calvin.

(2.) *Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more, v.* 10. We may understand this, [1.] Of Christ's personal righteousness. He shall convince the world that Jesus of Nazareth was Christ the righteous (1 John ii. 1), as the centurion owned (Luke xxiii. 47), *Certainly this was a righteous man.* His enemies put him under the worst of characters, and multitudes were not or would not be convinced but that he was a bad man, which strengthened their prejudices against his doctrine; but he is *justified by the Spirit* (1 Tim. iii. 16), he is proved to be a *righteous man,* and not a deceiver; and then the point is in effect gained; for he is either the great Redeemer or a great cheat; but a cheat we are sure he is not. Now by what medium or argument will the Spirit convince men of the sincerity of the Lord Jesus? Why, *First,* Their *seeing him no more* will contribute something towards the removal of their prejudices; they shall see him no more *in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the form of a servant,* which made

them slight him. Moses was more respected after his removal than before. But, *Secondly,* His *going to the Father* would be a full conviction of it. The coming of the Spirit, according to the promise, was a proof of Christ's exaltation to God's *right hand* (Acts ii. 33), and this was a demonstration of his righteousness; for the holy God would never set a deceiver at his right hand. [2.] Of Christ's righteousness communicated to us for our justification and salvation; that everlasting righteousness which Messiah was to bring in, Dan. ix. 24. Now, *First,* The Spirit shall convince men of this righteousness. Having by convictions of sin shown them their need of a righteousness, lest this should drive them to despair he will show them where it is to be had, and how they may, upon their believing, be acquitted from guilt, and accepted as righteous in God's sight. It was hard to convince those of this righteousness that *went about to establish their own* (Rom. x. 3), but the Spirit will do it. *Secondly,* Christ's ascension is the great argument proper to convince men of this righteousness: *I go to the Father, and,* as an evidence of my welcome with him, *you shall see me no more.* If Christ had left any part of his undertaking unfinished, he had been sent back again; but now that we are sure he is *at the right hand of God* we are sure of being justified through him.

(3.) *Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged, v.* 11. Observe here, [1.] The devil, *the prince of this world,* was judged, was discovered to be a great deceiver and destroyer, and as such judgment was entered against him, and execution in part done. He was cast out of the Gentile world when his oracles were silenced and his altars deserted, cast out of the bodies of many in Christ's name, which miraculous power continued long in the church; he was cast out of the souls of people by the grace of God working with the gospel of Christ; he *fell as lightning from heaven.* [2.] This is a good argument wherewith the Spirit convinces the world of judgment, that is, *First,* Of inherent holiness and sanctification, Matt. xii. 18. By *the judgment of the prince of this world,* it appears that Christ is stronger than Satan, and can disarm and dispossess him, and set up his throne upon the ruins of his. *Secondly,* Of a new and better dispensation of things. He shall show that Christ's errand into the world was to set things to right in it, and to introduce times of reformation and regeneration; and he proves it by this, that *the prince of this world,* the great master of misrule, is judged and expelled. All will be well when his power is broken who made all the mischief. *Thirdly,* Of the power and dominion of the Lord Jesus. He shall convince the world that *all judgment is committed to him,* and that he is the *Lord of all,* which is evident by this, that he has judged the prince of this world, has broken *the serpent's head, destroyed him that had the power of death, and spoiled principalities;* if Satan be thus subdued by Christ, we may be sure no other power can stand before him. *Fourthly,* Of the final day of judgment: all the obstinate enemies of Christ's gospel and kingdom shall certainly be reckoned with at last, for the devil, their ringleader, is judged.

III. That the coming of the Spirit would be of unspeakable advantage to the disciples themselves. The Spirit has work to do, not only on the enemies of Christ, to convince and humble them, but upon his servants and agents, to instruct and comfort them; and therefore it was *expedient for them that he should go away.*

1. He intimates to them the tender sense he had of their present weakness (*v.* 12): *I have yet many things to say unto you* (not which should have been said, but which he could and would have said), *but you cannot bear them now.* See what a teacher Christ is. (1.) None like him for copiousness; when he has said much, he has still many things more to say; treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him; we are not straitened in him, if we be not straitened in ourselves. (2.) None like him for compassion; he would have told them more of *the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,* particularly of the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, but they could not bear it, it would have confounded and stumbled them, rather than have given them any satisfaction. When, after his resurrection, they spoke to him of *restoring the kingdom to Israel,* he referred them to *the coming of the Holy Ghost,* by which they should receive power to bear those discoveries which were so contrary to the notions they had received that they could not *bear them now.*

2. He assures them of sufficient assistances, by the pouring out of the Spirit. They were now conscious to themselves of great dulness, and many mistakes; and what shall they do now their Master is leaving them? "*But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come,* you will be easy, and all will be well." Well indeed; for he shall undertake to guide the apostles, and glorify Christ.

(1.) To guide the apostles. He will take care,

[1.] That they do not miss their way: *He will guide you;* as the camp of Israel was guided through the wilderness by *the pillar of cloud and fire.* The Spirit guided their tongues in speaking, and their pens in writing, to secure them from mistakes. The Spirit is given us to be our guide (Rom. viii. 14), not only to show us the way, but to go along with us, by his continued aids and influences.

[2.] That they do not come short of their end: *He will guide them into all truth,* as the skilful pilot guides the ship into the port it is bound for. To be led *into a truth* is more than barely to know it; it is to be intimately and experimentally acquainted with

it; to be piously and strongly affected with it; not only to have the notion of it in our heads, but the relish and savour and power of it in our hearts; it denotes a gradual discovery of truth shining more and more: "He shall lead you by those truths that are plain and easy to those that are more difficult." But how into *all truth?* The meaning is,

First, Into the whole truth relating to their embassy; whatever was needful or useful for them to know, in order to the due discharge of their office, they should be fully instructed in it; what truths they were to teach others the Spirit would teach them, would give them the understanding of, and enable them both to explain and to defend.

Secondly, Into nothing but the truth. All that *he shall guide you into* shall be *truth* (1 John ii. 27); *the anointing is truth.* In the following words he proves both these:—1. "The Spirit shall teach nothing but the truth, *for he shall not speak of himself* any doctrine distinct from mine, *but whatsoever he shall hear,* and knows to be the mind of the Father, *that,* and that only, *shall he speak.*" This intimates, (1.) That the testimony of the Spirit, in the word and by the apostles, is what we may rely upon. The *Spirit* knows *and searches all things, even the deep things of God,* and the apostles received that Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11), so that we may venture our souls upon the Spirit's word. (2.) That the testimony of the Spirit always concurs with the word of Christ, *for he does not speak of himself,* has no separate interest or intention of his own, but, as in essence so in records, he *is one with the Father and the Son,* 1 John v. 7. Men's word and spirit often disagree, but the eternal Word and the eternal Spirit never do. 2. "He shall teach you all truth, and keep back nothing that is profitable for you, for *he will show you things to come.*" The Spirit was in the apostles a Spirit of prophecy; it was foretold that he should be so (Joel ii. 28), and he was so. *The Spirit showed them things to come,* as Acts xi. 28; xx. 23; xxi. 11. The Spirit spoke of the apostasy of the *latter times,* 1 Tim. iv. 1. John, when he was in the Spirit, had *things to come* shown him in vision. Now this was a great satisfaction to their own minds, and of use to them in their conduct, and was also a great confirmation of their mission. Jansenius has a pious note upon this: We should not grudge that the Spirit does not now *show us things to come* in this world, as he did to the apostles; let it suffice that the Spirit in the word hath *shown us things to come* in the other world, which are our chief concern.

(2.) The Spirit undertook to glorify Christ, *v.* 14, 15. [1.] Even the sending of the Spirit was the glorifying of Christ. God the Father glorified him in heaven, and the Spirit glorified him on earth. It was the honour of the Redeemer that the Spirit was both sent in his name and sent on his errand, to carry on and perfect his undertaking. All the gifts and graces of the Spirit, all the preaching and all the writing of the apostles, under the influence of the Spirit, the tongues, and miracles, were to glorify Christ. [2.] The Spirit glorified Christ by leading his followers into *the truth as it is in Jesus,* Eph. iv. 21. He assures them, *First,* That the Spirit should communicate the things of Christ to them: *He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.* As in essence *he proceeded from the Son,* so in influence and operation he derives from him. *He shall take* ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ—*of that which is mine.* All that the Spirit shows us, that is, applies to us, for our instruction and comfort, all that he gives us for our strength and quickening, and all that he secures and seals to us, did all belong to Christ, and was had and received from him. All was his, for he bought it, and paid dearly for it, and therefore he had reason to call it his own; his, for he first received it; it was given him as the head of the church, to be communicated by him to all his members. The Spirit came not to erect a new kingdom, but to advance and establish the same kingdom that Christ had erected, to maintain the same interest and pursue the same design; those therefore that pretend to the Spirit, and vilify Christ, give themselves the lie, for he came to glorify Christ. *Secondly,* That herein the things of God should be communicated to us. Lest any should think that the receiving of this would not make them much the richer, he adds, *All things that the Father hath are mine.* As God, all that self-existent light and self-sufficient happiness which *the Father has,* he has; as Mediator, *all things are delivered to him of the Father* (Matt. xi. 27); all that *grace and truth* which God designed to show to us he lodged in the hands of the Lord Jesus, Col. i. 19. Spiritual blessings in heavenly things are given by the Father to the Son for us, and the Son entrusts the Spirit to convey them to us. Some apply it to that which goes just before: *He shall show you things to come,* and so it is explained by Rev. i. 1. God gave *it to Christ, and he signified it to John, who wrote what the Spirit said,* Rev. i. 1.

16 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. 17 Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? 18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. 19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him,

and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? 20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. 21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Our Lord Jesus, for the comfort of his sorrowful disciples, here promises that he would visit them again.

I. Observe the intimation he gave them of the comfort he designed them, *v.* 16. Here he tells them,

1. That they should now shortly lose the sight of him: *A little while, and you* that have seen me so long, and still desire to *see me, shall not see me;* and therefore, if they had any good question to ask him, they must ask quickly, for he was now taking his leave of them. Note, It is good to consider how near to a period our seasons of grace are, that we may be quickened to improve them while they are continued. Now our eyes see our teachers, see the days *of the Son of man;* but, perhaps, yet *a little while, and we shall not see them.* They lost the sight of Christ, (1.) At his death, when he withdrew from this world, and never after showed himself openly in it. The most that death does to our Christian friends is to take them out of our sight, not out of being, not out of bliss, not out of all relation to us, only out of sight, and then not out of mind. (2.) At his ascension, when he withdrew from them (from those who, after his resurrection, had for some time conversed with him), *out of their sight; a cloud received* him, and, though they looked up stedfastly after him, *they saw him no more,* Acts i. 9, 10; 2 Kings ii. 12. See 2 Cor. v. 16.

2. That yet they should speedily recover the sight of him: *Again a little while, and you shall see me,* and therefore you ought not to *sorrow as those that have no hope.* His farewell was not a final farewell; they should see him again, (1.) At his resurrection, soon after his death, when *he showed himself alive,* by many infallible proofs, and this in a very little while, not forty hours. See Hos. vi. 2. (2.) By the pouring out of the Spirit, soon after his ascension, which scattered the mists of ignorance and mistake they were almost lost in, and gave them a much clearer insight into the mysteries of Christ's gospel than they had yet had. The Spirit's coming was Christ's visit to his disciples, not a transient but a permanent one, and such a visit as abundantly retrieved the sight of him. (3.) At his second coming. They saw him again as they removed one by one to him at death, and they shall all see him together at the end of time, when *he shall come in the clouds, and every eye shall see him.* It might be truly said of this that it was but *a little while, and they should see him;* for what are the days of time, to the days of eternity? 2 Pet. iii. 8, 9.

3. He assigns the reason: "*Because I go to the Father;* and therefore," (1.) "I must leave you for a time, because my business calls me to the upper world, and you must be content to spare me, for really my business is yours." (2.) "Therefore you shall see me again shortly, for the Father will not detain me to your prejudice. If I go upon your errand, you shall see me again as soon as my business is done, as soon as is convenient."

It should seem, all this refers rather to his going away at death, and return at his resurrection, than his going away at his ascension, and his return at the end of time; for it was his death that was their grief, not his ascension (Luke xxiv. 52), and between his death and resurrection it was indeed a *little while.* And it may be read, not, *yet a little while* (it is not ἔτι μικρὸν, as it is *ch.* xii. 35), but μικρὸν—*for a little while you shall not see me,* namely, the three days of his lying in the grave; and again, *for a little while you shall see me,* namely, the forty days between his resurrection and ascension. Thus we may say of our ministers and Christian friends, *Yet a little while, and we shall not see them,* either they must leave us or we must leave them, but it is certain that we must part shortly, and yet not part for ever. It is but a good night to those whom we hope to see with *joy in the morning.*

II. The perplexity of the disciples upon the intimation given them; they were at a loss what to make of it (*v.* 17, 18): *Some of them said,* softly, *among themselves,* either some of the weakest, that were least able, or some of the most inquisitive, that were most desirous, to understand him, *What is this that he saith to us?* Though Christ had often spoken to this purport before, yet still they were in the dark; though *precept be upon precept,* it is in vain, unless God give the understanding. Now see here, 1. The disciples' weakness, in that they could not understand so plain a saying, to which Christ had already given them a key, having told them so often in plain terms that he should *be killed, and the third day rise again;* yet, say they, *We cannot tell what he saith;* for, (1.) *Sorrow had filled their heart,* and made them unapt to receive the impressions of comfort. The darkness of ignorance and the darkness of melancholy commonly increase

and thicken one another; mistakes cause griefs, and then griefs confirm mistakes. (2.) The notion of Christ's secular kingdom was so deeply rooted in them that they could make no sense at all of those sayings of his which they knew not how to reconcile with that notion. When we think the scripture must be made to agree with the false ideas we have imbibed, no wonder that we complain of its difficulty; but, when our reasonings are captivated to revelation, the matter becomes easy. (3.) It should seem, that which puzzled them was the *little while*. If he must go at last, yet they could not conceive how he should leave them quickly, when his stay hitherto had been so short, and so little while, comparatively. Thus it is hard for us to represent to ourselves that change as near which yet we know will come certainly, and may come suddenly. When we are told, *Yet a little while* and we must go hence, *yet a little while* and we must *give up our account*, we know not how to digest it; for we always took the vision to be *for a great while to come*, Ezek. xii. 27. 2. Their willingness to be instructed. When they were at a loss about the meaning of Christ's words, they conferred together upon it, and asked help of one another. By mutual converse about divine things we both borrow the light of others and improve our own. Observe how exactly they repeat Christ's words. Though we cannot fully solve every difficulty we meet with in scripture, yet we must not therefore throw it by, but revolve what we cannot explain, and wait *till God shall reveal even this unto us.*

III. The further explication of what Christ had said.

1. See here *why* Christ explained it (*v.* 19); because he *knew they were desirous to ask him*, and designed it. Note, The knots we cannot untie we must bring to him who alone can give an understanding. Christ *knew they were desirous to ask him*, but were bashful and ashamed to ask. Note, Christ takes cognizance of pious desires, though they be not as yet offered up, the *groanings that cannot be uttered*, and even *anticipates them with the blessings of his goodness.* Christ instructed those who he *knew were desirous to ask him*, though they did not ask. *Before we call, he answers.* Another reason why Christ explained it was because he observed them canvassing this matter among themselves: "*Do you enquire this among yourselves?* Well, I will make it easy to you." This intimates to us who they are that Christ will teach: (1.) The humble, that confess their ignorance, for so much their enquiry implied. (2.) The diligent, that use the means they have: "*Do you enquire?* You shall be taught. *To him that hath shall be given.*"

2. See here *how* he explained it; not by a nice and critical descant upon the words, but by bringing the thing more closely to them; he had told them of *not seeing him, and seeing him*, and they did not apprehend his meaning, and therefore he explains it by their sorrowing and rejoicing, because we commonly measure things according as they affect us (*v.* 20): *You shall weep and lament*, for my departure, *but the world shall rejoice* in it; *and you shall be sorrowful*, while I am absent, *but*, upon my return to you, *your sorrow will be turned into joy.* But he says nothing of the *little while*, because he saw that this perplexed them more than any thing; and it is of no consequence to us to know *the times and the seasons.* Note, Believers have joy or sorrow according as they have or have not a sight of Christ, and the tokens of his presence with them.

(1.) What Christ says here, and *v.* 21, 22, of their sorrow and joy, is primarily to be understood of the present state and circumstances of the disciples, and so we have,

[1.] Their grief foretold: *You shall weep and lament, and you shall be sorrowful.* The sufferings of Christ could not but be the sorrow of his disciples. They wept for him because they loved him; the pain of our friend is a pain to ourselves; when they slept, it was for sorrow, Luke xxii. 45. They wept for themselves, and their own loss, and the sad apprehensions they had of what would become of them when he was gone. It could not but be a grief to lose him for whom they had left their all, and from whom they expected so much. Christ has given notice to his disciples beforehand to expect sorrow, that they may treasure up comforts accordingly.

[2.] The world's rejoicing at the same time: *But the world shall rejoice.* That which is the grief of saints is the joy of sinners. *First*, Those that are *strangers to Christ* will continue in their carnal mirth, and not at all interest themselves in their sorrows. *It is nothing to them that pass by*, Lam. i. 12. Nay, *Secondly*, Those that are *enemies to Christ* will rejoice because they hope they have conquered him, and ruined his interest. When the chief priests had Christ upon the cross, we may suppose they made merry over him, as those that dwell on earth over the slain witnesses, Rev. xi. 10. Let it be no surprise to us if we see others triumphing, when we are *trembling for the ark.*

[3.] The return of joy to them in due time: *But your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* As *the joy of the hypocrite*, so the sorrow of the true Christian, *is but for a moment. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.* His resurrection was *life from the dead* to them, and their sorrow for Christ's sufferings was turned into a joy of such a nature as could not be damped and embittered by any sufferings of their own. They were *sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing* (2 Cor. vi. 10), had sorrowful lives and yet joyful hearts.

(2.) It is applicable to all the faithful fol-

lowers of the Lamb, and describes the common case of Christians

[1.] Their condition and disposition are both mournful; sorrows are their lot, and seriousness is their temper: those that are acquainted with Christ must, as he was, be *acquainted with grief;* they *weep and lament* for that which others make light of, their own sins, and the sins of those about them; they mourn with sufferers that mourn, and mourn for sinners that mourn not for themselves.

[2.] The world, at the same time, goes away with all the mirth; they laugh now, and spend their days so jovially that one would think they neither knew sorrow nor feared it. Carnal mirth and pleasures are surely none of the best things, for then the worst men would not have so large a share of them, and the favourites of heaven be such strangers to them.

[3.] Spiritual mourning will shortly be turned into eternal rejoicing. *Gladness is sown for the upright in heart, that sow in tears,* and without doubt *they will* shortly *reap in joy.* Their sorrow will not only be followed with joy, but turned into it; for the most precious comforts take rise from pious griefs. This he illustrates by a similitude taken from a woman in travail, to whose sorrows he compares those of his disciples, for their encouragement; for it is the will of Christ that his people should be a comforted people.

First, Here is the similitude or parable itself (*v.* 21): *A woman,* we know, *when she is in travail, hath sorrow,* she is in exquisite pain, *because her hour is come,* the hour which nature and providence have fixed, which she has expected, and cannot escape; *but as soon as she is delivered of the child,* provided she be safely delivered, and the child be, though a *Jabez* (1 Chron. iv. 9), yet not a *Benoni* (Gen. xxxv. 18), then *she remembers no more the anguish,* her groans and complaints are all over, and the after-pains are more easily borne, *for joy that a man is born into the world;* ἄνθρωπος, one of the human race, a child, be it son or daughter, for the word signifies either. Observe,

a. The fruit of the curse, in the sorrow and pain of a woman in travail, according to the sentence (Gen. iii. 16), *In sorrow shalt thou bring forth.* These pains are extreme, the greatest griefs and pains are compared to them (Ps. xlviii. 6; Isa. xiii. 8; xxi. 3; Jer. iv. 31; vi. 24), and they are inevitable, 1 Thess. v. 3. See what this world is; all its roses are surrounded with thorns; all the children of men are upon this account foolish children, that they are *the heaviness of her that bore them* from the very first. This comes of sin.

b. The fruit of the blessing, in *the joy there is for a child born into the world.* If God had not preserved the blessing in force after the fall, *Be fruitful and multiply,* parents could never have looked upon their children with any comfort; but what is the fruit of a blessing is matter of joy; the birth of a living child is, (*a.*) The parents' joy; it makes them very glad, Jer. xx. 15. Though children are certain cares, uncertain comforts, and often prove the greatest crosses, yet it is natural to us to rejoice at their birth. Could we be sure that our children, like John, would *be filled with the Holy Ghost,* we might, indeed, like his parents, have *joy and gladness* in their birth, Luke i. 14, 15. But when we consider, not only that they are born in sin, but, as it is here expressed, that *they are born into the world,* a world of snares and a vale of tears, we shall see reason to rejoice with trembling, lest it should prove *better for them that they had never been born.* (*b.*) It is such joy as makes the anguish not to be remembered, or *remembered as waters that pass away,* Job xi. 16. *Hæc olim meminisse juvabit.* Gen. xli. 51. Now this is very proper to set forth, [*a.*] The sorrows of Christ's disciples in this world; they are like travailing pains, sure and sharp, but not to last long, and in order to a joyful product; they are in *pain to be delivered,* as the church is described (Rev. xii. 2), and *the whole creation,* Rom. viii. 22. And, [*b.*] Their joys after these sorrows, which will *wipe away all tears,* for *the former things are passed away,* Rev. xxi. 4. When they are born into that blessed world, and reap the fruit of all their services and sorrows, the toil and anguish of this world will be no more remembered, as Christ's were not, when *he saw of the travail of his soul* abundantly to his satisfaction, Isa. liii. 11.

Secondly, The application of the similitude (*v.* 22): "*You now have sorrow,* and are likely to have more, *but I will see you again,* and you me, and then all will be well."

a. Here again he tells them of their *sorrow:* "*You now therefore have sorrow; therefore,* because I am leaving you," as is intimated in the antithesis, *I will see you again.* Note, Christ's withdrawings are just cause of grief to his disciples. *If he hide his face,* they cannot but be *troubled.* When the sun sets, the sun-flower will hang the head. And Christ takes notice of these griefs, has a bottle for the tears, and a book for the sighs, of all gracious mourners.

b. He, more largely than before, assures them of a return of joy, Ps. xxx. 5, 11. He himself went through his own griefs, and bore ours, *for the joy that was set before him;* and he would have us encourage ourselves with the same prospect. Three things recommend the joy:—(*a.*) The cause of it: "*I will see you again.* I will make you a kind and friendly visit, to enquire after you, and minister comfort to you." Note, [*a.*] Christ will graciously return to those that wait for him, though *for a small moment* he has seemed *to forsake them,* Isa. liv. 7. Men, when they are exalted, will scarcely look upon their inferiors; but the exalted Jesus

will visit his disciples. They shall not only see him in his glory, but he will see them in their meanness. [*b.*] Christ's returns are returns of joy to all his disciples. When clouded evidences are cleared up and interrupted communion is revived, *then is the mouth filled with laughter.* (*b.*) The cordiality of it: *Your heart shall rejoice.* Divine consolations *put gladness into the heart.* Joy in the heart is solid, and not flashy; it is secret, and that which a *stranger does not intermeddle with;* it is sweet, and gives a good man satisfaction in himself; it is sure, and not easily broken in upon. Christ's disciples should heartily rejoice in his returns, sincerely and greatly. (*c.*) The continuance of it: *Your joy no man taketh from you.* Men will attempt to take their joy from them; they would if they could; but they shall not prevail. Some understand it of the eternal joy of those that are glorified; those that have *entered into the joy of the Lord shall go no more out.* Our joys on earth we are liable to be robbed of by a thousand accidents, but heavenly joys are everlasting. I rather understand it of the spiritual joys of those that are sanctified, particularly the apostles' joy in their apostleship. *Thanks be to God,* says Paul, in the name of the rest, *who always causes us to triumph,* 2 Cor. ii. 14. A malicious world would have taken it from them; if bonds and banishments, tortures and deaths, could have taken it from them, they would have lost it; but, when they took every thing else from them, they could not take this; *as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.* They could not rob them of their joy, because they could not *separate them from the love of Christ,* could not rob them of their God, nor of their *treasure in heaven.*

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you. 24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. 25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. 26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

An answer to their askings is here promised, for their further comfort. Now there are two ways of asking: asking by way of enquiry, which is the asking of the ignorant; and asking by way of request, which is the asking of the indigent. Christ here speaks of both.

I. By way of enquiry, they should not need to ask (*v.* 23): "*In that day you shall ask me nothing;*" οὐκ ἐρωτήσετε οὐδέν—*you shall ask no questions;* "you shall have such a clear knowledge of gospel mysteries, by the opening of your understandings, that you shall not need to enquire" (as Heb. viii. 11, *they shall not teach);* "you shall have more knowledge on a sudden than hitherto you have had by diligent attendance." They had asked some ignorant questions (as *ch.* ix. 2), some ambitious questions (as Matt. xviii. 1), some distrustful ones (as Matt. xix. 27), some impertinent ones (as *ch.* xxi. 21), some curious ones (as Acts i. 6); but, after the Spirit was poured out, nothing of all this. In the story *of the apostles' Acts* we seldom find them asking questions, as David, *Shall I do this?* Or, *Shall I go thither?* For they were constantly under a divine guidance. In that weighty case of preaching *the gospel to the Gentiles,* Peter went, *nothing doubting,* Acts x. 20. Asking questions supposes us at a loss, or at least at a stand, and the best of us have need to ask questions; but we should aim at such a full assurance of understanding that we may not hesitate, but be constantly led in a plain path both of truth and duty.

Now for this he gives a reason (*v.* 25), which plainly refers to this promise, that they should not need to ask questions: "*These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs,* in such a way as you have thought not so plain and intelligible as you could have wished, *but the time cometh when I shall show you plainly,* as plainly as you can desire, *of the Father,* so that you shall not need to ask questions."

1. The great thing Christ would lead them into was the knowledge of God: "*I will show you the Father,* and bring you acquainted with him." This is that which Christ designs to give and which all true Christians desire to have. When Christ would express the greatest favour intended for his disciples, he tells them that he would *show them plainly of the Father;* for what is the happiness of heaven, but immediately and everlastingly to see God? *To know God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ* is the greatest mystery for the understanding to please itself with the contemplation of; and to know him as our Father is the greatest happiness for the will and affections to please themselves with the choice and enjoyment of.

2. Of this he had hitherto spoken to them in proverbs, which are wise and instructive sayings, but figurative, and resting in generals. Christ had spoken many things very plainly to them, and expounded his parables privately to the disciples, but, (1.) Considering their dulness, and unaptness to receive what he said to them, he might be said to speak in proverbs; what he said to them was as a book sealed, Isa. xxix. 11. (2.) Com-

paring the discoveries he had made to them, in what he had spoken to their ears, with what he would make to them when he would *put his Spirit into their heart*, all hitherto had been but proverbs. It would be a pleasing surprise to themselves, and they would think themselves in a new world, when they would reflect upon all their former notions as confused and enigmatical, compared with their present clear and distinct knowledge of divine things. *The ministration of the letter* was nothing to *that of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 8—11. (3.) Confining it to what he had said of *the Father*, and the counsels of *the Father*, what he had said was very dark, compared with what was shortly to be revealed, Col. ii. 2.

3. He would speak to them *plainly*, *παῤῥησία—with freedom*, of the Father. When the Spirit was poured out, the apostles attained to a much greater knowledge of divine things than they had before, as appears by the utterance the Spirit gave them, Acts ii. 4. They were led into the mystery of those things of which they had previously a very confused idea; and what the Spirit showed them Christ is here said to show them, for, as the Father speaks by the Son, so the Son by the Spirit. But this promise will have its full accomplishment in heaven, where we shall see the Father as he is, *face to face*, not as we do now, *through a glass darkly* (1 Cor. xiii. 12), which is matter of comfort to us under the cloud of present darkness, by reason of which we cannot *order our speech*, but often disorder it. While we are here, we have many questions to ask concerning the invisible God and the invisible world; but in that day we shall see all things clearly, and *ask no more questions.*

II. He promises that by way of request they should ask nothing in vain. It is taken for granted that all Christ's disciples give themselves to prayer. He had taught them by his precept and pattern to be much in prayer; this must be their support and comfort when he had left them; their instruction, direction, strength, and success, must be fetched in by prayer. Now,

1. Here is an express promise of a grant, *v.* 23. The preface to this promise is such as makes it inviolably sure, and leaves no room to question it: "*Verily, verily, I say unto you*, I pledge my veracity upon it." The promise itself is incomparably rich and sweet; the golden sceptre is here held out to us, with this word, *What is thy petition, and it shall be granted?* For he says, *Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you.* We had it before, *ch.* xiv. 13. What would we more? The promise is as express as we can desire. (1.) We are here taught how to seek; we must *ask the Father in Christ's name;* we must have an eye to God as a Father, and come as children to him; and to Christ as Mediator, and come as clients. Asking of the Father includes a sense of spiritual wants and a desire of spiritual blessings, with a conviction that they are to be had from God only. It includes also humility of address to him, with a believing confidence in him, as a Father able and ready to help us. Asking in Christ's name includes an acknowledgment of our own unworthiness to receive any favour from God, a complacency in the method God has taken of keeping up a correspondence with us by his Son, and an entire dependence upon Christ as *the Lord our Righteousness.* (2.) We are here told how we shall speed: *He will give it to you.* What more can we wish for than to have what we want, nay, to have what we will, in conformity to God's will, for the asking? He *will give it to you* from whom *proceedeth every good and perfect gift.* What Christ purchased by the merit of his death, he needed not for himself, but intended it for, and consigned it to, his faithful followers; and having given a valuable consideration for it, which was accepted in full, by this promise he draws a bill as it were upon the treasury in heaven, which we are to present by prayer, and *in his name* to ask for that which is purchased and promised, according to the true intent of the new covenant. Christ had promised them great illumination by the Spirit, but they must pray for it, and did so, Acts i. 14. God will for this be enquired of. He had promised them perfection hereafter, but what shall they do in the mean time? They must continue praying. Perfect fruition is reserved for the land of our rest; asking and receiving are the comfort of the land of our pilgrimage.

2. Here is an invitation for them to petition. It is thought sufficient if great men permit addresses, but Christ calls upon us to petition, *v.* 24.

(1.) He looks back upon their practice hitherto: *Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name.* This refers either, [1.] To the matter of their prayers: "You have asked nothing comparatively, nothing to what you might have asked, and will ask when the Spirit is poured out. See what a generous benefactor our Lord Jesus is, above all benefactors; he gives liberally, and is so far from upbraiding us with the frequency and largeness of his gifts that he rather upbraids us with the seldomness and straitness of our requests: "*You have asked nothing* in comparison of what you want, and what I have to give, and have promised to give." We are told to *open our mouth wide.* Or, [2.] To the name in which they prayed. They prayed many a prayer, but never so expressly in the name of Christ as now he was directing them to do; for he had not as yet offered up that great sacrifice in the virtue of which our prayers were to be accepted, nor entered upon his intercession for us, the incense whereof was to perfume all our devotions, and so enable us to pray in his name. Hitherto they had cast out devils, and healed

diseases, in the name of Christ, as a king and a prophet, but they could not as yet distinctly pray in his name as a priest.

(2.) He looks forward to their practice for the future: *Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.* Here, [1.] He directs them to ask for all that which they needed and he had promised. [2.] He assures them that they shall *receive.* What we ask from a principle of grace God will graciously give: *You shall receive it.* There is something more in this than in the promise that he will give it. He will not only give it, but give you to receive it, give you the comfort and benefit of it, *a heart to eat of it,* Eccl. vi. 2. [3.] That hereby *their joy shall be full.* This denotes, *First,* The blessed effect of the *prayer of faith;* it helps to fill up the *joy of faith.* Would we have our joy full, as full as it is capable of being in this world, we must be *much in prayer.* When we are told to *rejoice evermore,* it follows immediately, *Pray without ceasing.* See how high we are to aim in prayer—not only at peace, but joy, a *fulness of joy.* Or, *Secondly,* The blessed effects of the *answer of peace:* "Ask, and you shall receive that which will *fill your joy.*" God's gifts, through Christ, fill the treasures of the soul, they fill its joys, Prov. viii. 21. "Ask for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and you shall receive it; and, whereas other knowledge *increaseth sorrow* (Eccl i. 18), the knowledge he gives will increase, will fill, *your joy.*"

3. Here are the grounds upon which they might hope to speed (*v.* 26, 27), which are summed up in short by the apostle (1 John ii. 1): "*We have an advocate with the Father.*

(1.) We have an advocate; as to this, Christ saw cause at present not to insist upon it, only to make the following encouragement shine the brighter: "*I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you.* Suppose I should not tell you that I will intercede for you, should not undertake to solicit every particular cause you have depending there, yet it may be a general ground of comfort that I have settled a correspondence between you and God, have erected a throne of grace, and consecrated for you a *new and living way into the holiest.*" He speaks as if they needed not any further favours, when he had prevailed for the gift of the Holy Ghost to *make intercession within them,* as a Spirit of adoption, crying *Abba, Father;* as if they had no further need of him to pray for them now; but we shall find that he does more for us than he says he will. Men's performances often come short of their promises, but Christ's go beyond them.

(2.) We have to do with a Father, which is so great an encouragement that it does in a manner supersede the other: *For the Father himself loveth you,* φιλεῖ ὑμᾶς, he is a friend to you, and you cannot be better befriended." Note, The disciples of Christ are the beloved of God himself Christ not only turned away God's wrath from us, and brought us into a covenant of peace and reconciliation, but purchased his favour for us, and brought us into a covenant of friendship. Observe what an emphasis is laid upon this "*The Father himself loveth you,* who is perfectly happy in the enjoyment of himself, whose self-love is both his infinite rectitude and his infinite blessedness; yet he is pleased to love you." The Father himself, whose favour you have forfeited, and whose wrath you have incurred, and with whom you need an advocate, he himself now loves you. Observe, [1.] Why the Father loved the disciples of Christ: *Because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God,* that is, because you are my disciples indeed: not as if the love began on their side, but when by his grace he has wrought in us a love to him he is well pleased with the work of his own hands. See here, *First,* What is the character of Christ's disciples; they love him, because they *believe he came out from God,* is the only-begotten of the Father, and his high-commissioner to the world. Note, Faith in Christ works by love to him, Gal. v. 6. If we believe him to be the Son of God, we cannot but love him as infinitely lovely in himself; and, if we believe him to be our Saviour, we cannot but love him as the most kind to us. Observe with what respect Christ is pleased to speak of his disciples' love to him, and how kindly he took it; he speaks of it as that which recommended them to his Father's favour: You have loved me and believed in me when the world has hated and rejected me; and you shall be distinguished, who have thus distinguished yourselves." *Secondly,* See what advantage Christ's faithful disciples have, the Father loves them, and that because they love Christ; so well pleased is he in him that he is well pleased with all his friends. [2.] What encouragement this gave them in prayer. They need not fear speeding when they came to one that loved them, and wished them well. *First,* This cautions us against hard thoughts of God. When we are taught in prayer to plead Christ's merit and intercession, it is not as if all the kindness were in Christ only, and in God nothing but wrath and fury; no, the matter is not so, the Father's love and good-will appointed Christ to be the Mediator; so that we owe Christ's merit to God's mercy in giving him for us. *Secondly,* Let it cherish and confirm in us good thoughts of God. Believers, that love Christ, ought to know that God loves them, and therefore to come boldly to him as children to a loving Father.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. 29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly,

and speakest no proverb. 30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. 31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? 32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Two things Christ here comforts his disciples with:—

I. With an assurance that, though he was leaving the world, he was returning to his Father, from whom he came forth *v.* 28—32, where we have,

1. A plain declaration of Christ's mission from the Father, and his return to him (*v.* 28): *I came forth from the Father, and am come,* as you see, *into the world. Again, I leave the world,* as you will see shortly, *and go to the Father.* This is the conclusion of the whole matter. There was nothing he had more inculcated upon them than these two things—whence he came, and whither he went, the *Alpha* and *Omega* of the *mystery of godliness* (1 Tim. iii. 16), that the Redeemer, in his entrance, was *God manifest in the flesh,* and in his exit was *received up into glory.*

(1.) These two great truths are here, [1.] Contracted, and put into a few words. Brief summaries of Christian doctrine are of great use to young beginners. The principles of the oracles of God brought into a little compass in creeds and catechisms have, like the beams of the sun contracted in a burning glass, conveyed divine light and heat with a wonderful power. Such we have, Job xxviii. 28; Eccl. xii. 13; 1 Tim i. 15; Tit. ii. 11, 12; 1 John v. 11; much in a little. [2.] Compared, and set the one over against the other. There is an admirable harmony in divine truths; they both corroborate and illustrate one another; Christ's coming and his going do so. Christ had commended his disciples for believing that he came forth from God (*v.* 27), and thence infers the necessity and equity of his returning to God again, which therefore should not seem to them either strange or sad. Note, The due improvement of what we know and own would help us into the understanding of that which seems difficult and doubtful.

(2.) If we ask concerning the Redeemer *whence he came,* and *whither he went,* we are told, [1.] That he *came from the Father,* who sanctified and sealed him; and he came into this world, this lower world, this world of mankind, among whom by his incarnation he was pleased to incorporate himself. Here his business lay, and hither he came to attend it. He left his home for this strange country; his palace for this cottage; wonderful condescension! [2.] That, when he had done his work on earth, he left the world, and went back to his Father at his ascension. He was not forced away, but made it his own act and deed to leave the world, to return to it no more till he comes to put an end to it; yet still he is spiritually present with his church, and will be to the end.

2. The disciples' satisfaction in this declaration (*v.* 29, 30): *Lo, now speakest thou plainly.* It should seem, this one word of Christ did them more good than all the rest, though he had said many things likely enough to fasten upon them. The Spirit, as the wind, blows when and where, and by what word he pleases; perhaps a word that has been *spoken once, yea twice,* and not perceived, yet, being often repeated, takes hold at last. Two things they improved in by this saying:—

(1.) In knowledge: *Lo, now speakest thou plainly.* When they were in the dark concerning what he said, they did not say, *Lo, now speakest thou obscurely,* as blaming him; but now that they apprehend his meaning they give him glory for condescending to their capacity: *Lo, now speakest thou plainly.* Divine truths are most likely to do good when they are spoken plainly, 1 Cor. ii. 4. Observe how they triumphed, as the mathematician did with his εὕρηκα, εὕρηκα, when he had hit upon a demonstration he had long been in quest of: *I have found it, I have found it.* Note, When Christ is pleased to speak plainly to our souls, and to bring us with open face to behold his glory, we have reason to rejoice in it.

(2.) In faith: *Now are we sure.* Observe, [1.] What was the matter of their faith: *We believe that thou camest forth from God.* He had said (*v.* 27) that they did believe this; "Lord" (say they) "we do believe it, and we have cause to believe it, and we know that we believe it, and have the comfort of it."

[2.] What was the motive of their faith—his omniscience. This proved him a teacher come from God, and more than a prophet, that he knew all things, which they were convinced of by this that he resolved those doubts which were hid in their hearts, and answered the scruples they had not confessed. Note, Those know Christ best that know him by experience, that can say of his power, It works in me; of his love, He loved me. And this proves Christ not only to have a divine mission, but to be a divine person, that he is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, therefore the essential, eternal Word, Heb. iv. 12, 13. He has made all the churches to know that he searches the reins and the

heart, Rev. ii. 23. This confirmed the faith of the disciples here, as it made the first impression upon the woman of Samaria that Christ *told her all things that ever she did* (*ch.* iv. 29), and upon Nathanael that Christ *saw him under the fig-tree, ch.* i. 48, 49.

These words, *and needest not that any man should ask thee,* may bespeak either, *First,* Christ's aptness to teach. He prevents us with his instructions, and is communicative of the *treasures of wisdom and knowledge* that are hid in him, and needs not to be importuned. Or, *Secondly,* His ability to teach: "Thou needest not, as other teachers, to have the learners' doubts told thee, for thou knowest, without being told, what they stumble at." The best of teachers can only answer what is spoken, but Christ can answer what is thought, what we are afraid to ask, as the disciples were, Mark ix. 32. Thus he *can have compassion,* Heb. v. 2.

3. The gentle rebuke Christ gave the disciples for their confidence that they now understood him, *v.* 31, 32. Observing how they triumphed in their attainments, he said, "*Do you now believe?* Do you now look upon yourselves as advanced and confirmed disciples? Do you now think you shall make no more blunders? Alas! you know not your own weakness; you will very shortly *be scattered every man to his own,*" &c. Here we have,

(1.) A question, designed to put them upon consideration: *Do you now believe?* [1.] "If now, why not sooner? Have you not heard the same things many a time before?" Those who after many instructions and invitations are at last persuaded to believe have reason to be ashamed that they stood it out so long. [2.] "If now, why not ever? When an hour of temptation comes, where will your faith be then?" As far as there is inconstancy in our faith there is cause to question the sincerity of it, and to ask, "Do we indeed believe?"

(2.) A prediction of their fall, that, how confident soever they were now of their own stability, in a little time they would all desert him, which was fulfilled that very night, when, upon his being seized by a party of the guards, *all his disciples forsook him and fled,* Matt. xxvi. 56. They were scattered, [1.] From one another; they shifted every one for his own safety, without any care or concern for each other. Troublous times are times of scattering to Christian societies; in the cloudy and dark day the flock of Christ is dispersed, Ezek. xxxiv. 12. So Christ, as a society, is not visible. [2.] Scattered from him: *You shall leave me alone.* They should have been witnesses for him upon his trial, should have ministered to him in his sufferings; if they could have given him no comfort they might have done him some credit; but they were ashamed of his chain, and afraid of sharing with him in his sufferings, and left him alone. Note, Many a good cause, when it is distressed by its enemies, is deserted by its friends. The disciples had *continued with Christ* in his other temptations, and yet turned their back upon him now; those that are tried, do not always prove trusty. If we at any time find our friends unkind to us, let us remember that Christ's were so to him. When they left him alone, they were scattered *every man to his own;* not to their own possessions or habitations, these were in Galilee; but to their own friends and acquaintance in Jerusalem; every one went his own way, where he fancied he should be most safe. Every man to secure his own; himself and his own life. Note, Those will not dare to suffer for their religion that *seek their own things* more than the *things of Christ,* and that look upon the things of this world as their τα ἴδια—*their own property,* and in which their happiness is bound up. Now observe here, *First,* Christ knew before that his disciples would thus desert him in the critical moment, and yet he was still tender of them, and in nothing unkind. We are ready to say of some, "If we could have foreseen their ingratitude, we would not have been so prodigal of our favours to them;" Christ did foresee theirs, and yet was kind to them. *Secondly,* He told them of it, to be a rebuke to their exultation in their present attainments: "*Do you now believe?* Be not high-minded, but fear; for you will find your faith so sorely shaken as to make it questionable whether it be sincere or no, in a little time." Note, Even when we are taking the comfort of our graces, it is good to be reminded of our danger from our corruptions. When our faith is strong, our love flaming, and our evidences are clear, yet we cannot infer thence that *to-morrow shall be as this day.* Even when we have most reason to think we stand, yet we have reason enough to take heed lest we fall. *Thirdly,* He spoke of it as a thing very near. *The hour was* already *come,* in a manner, when they would be as shy of him as ever they had been fond of him. Note, A little time may produce great changes, both concerning us and in us.

(3.) An assurance of his own comfort notwithstanding: *Yet I am not alone.* He would not be thought to complain of their deserting him, as if it were any real damage to him; for in their absence he should be sure of his Father's presence, which was *instar omnium—every thing: The Father is with me.* We may consider this, [1.] As a privilege peculiar to the Lord Jesus; the Father was so with him in his sufferings as he never was with any, for still he was *in the bosom of the Father.* The divine nature did not desert the human nature, but supported it, and put an invincible comfort and an inestimable value into his sufferings. The Father had engaged to be with him in his whole undertaking (Ps. lxxxix. 21, &c.), and to preserve him (Isa. xlix. 8); this emboldened him, Isa. l. 7. Even when he complained of his Father's forsaking him, yet he

called him *My God,* and presently after was so well assured of his favourable presence with him as to commit his Spirit into his hand. This he had comforted himself with all along (*ch.* viii. 29), *He that sent me is with me, the Father hath not left me alone,* and especially now at last. This assists our faith in the acceptableness of Christ's satisfaction; no doubt, the Father was well pleased in him, for he went along with him in his undertaking from first to last. [2.] As a privilege common to all believers, by virtue of their union with Christ; when they are alone, they are *not alone,* but *the Father is with them. First,* When solitude is their choice, when they are alone, as Isaac in the field, Nathanael under the fig-tree, Peter upon the house-top, meditating and praying, the Father is with them. Those that converse with God in solitude are never less alone than when alone. A good God and a good heart are good company at any time. *Secondly,* When solitude is their affliction, their enemies lay them alone, and their friends leave them so, their company, like Job's, is made desolate; yet they are not so much alone as they are thought to be, *the Father is with them,* as he was with Joseph in his bonds and with John in his banishment. In their greatest troubles they are as one whom his father pities, as one whom his mother comforts. And, while we have God's favourable presence with us, we are happy, and ought to be easy, though all the world forsake us. *Non Deo tribuimus justum honorem nisi solus ipse nobis sufficiat—We do not render due honour to God, unless we deem him alone all-sufficient.*—Calvin.

II. He comforts them with a promise of peace in him, by virtue of his victory over the world, whatever troubles they might meet with in it (*v.* 33): "*These things have I spoken, that in me you might have peace;* and if you have it not in me you will not have it at all, for *in the world you shall have tribulation;* you must expect no other, and yet may cheer up yourselves, for *I have overcome the world.*" Observe,

1. The end Christ aimed at in preaching this farewell sermon to his disciples: *That in him they might have peace.* He did not hereby intend to give them a full view of that doctrine which they were shortly to be made masters of by the pouring out of the Spirit, but only to satisfy them for the present that his departure from them was really for the best. Or, we may take it more generally: Christ had said all this to them that by enjoying him they might have the best enjoyment of themselves. Note, (1.) It is the will of Christ that his disciples should have peace within, whatever their troubles may be without. (2.) Peace in Christ is the only true peace, and in him alone believers have it, for *this man shall be the peace,* Mic. v. 5. Through him we have peace with God, and so in him we have peace in our own minds. (3.) The word of Christ aims at this, *that in him we may have peace.* Peace is the *fruit of the lips, and of his lips,* Isa. lvii. 19.

2. The entertainment they were likely to meet with in the world: "You shall not have outward peace, never expect it" Though they were sent to proclaim *peace on earth,* and *good-will towards men,* they must expect trouble on earth, and ill-will from men. Note, It has been the lot of Christ's disciples to have more or less tribulation in this world. Men persecute them because they are so good, and God corrects them because they are no better. Men design to cut them off from the earth, and God designs by affliction to make them meet for heaven; and so between both *they shall have tribulation.*

3. The encouragement Christ gives them with reference hereto: *But be of good cheer,* θαρσεῖτε. "Not only be of good comfort, but be of good courage; have a good heart on it, all shall be well." Note, In the midst of the tribulations of this world it is the duty and interest of Christ's disciples to be of good cheer, to keep up their delight in God whatever is pressing, and their hope in God whatever is threatening; as sorrowful indeed, in compliance with the temper of the climate, and yet always rejoicing, always cheerful (2 Cor. vi. 10), even *in tribulation,* Rom. v. 3.

4. The ground of that encouragement: *I have overcome the world.* Christ's victory is a Christian's triumph. Christ overcame the prince of this world, disarmed him, and cast him out; and still treads Satan under our feet. He overcame the children of this world, by the conversion of many to the faith and obedience of his gospel, making them the children of his kingdom. When he sends his disciples to preach the gospel to all the world, "*Be of good cheer,*" says he, "*I have overcome the world* as far as I have gone, and so shall you; though you have tribulation in the world, yet you shall gain your point, and captivate the world," Rev. vi. 2. He overcame the wicked of the world, for many a time he put his enemies to silence, to shame; "And be you of good cheer, for the Spirit will enable you to do so too." He overcame the evil things of the world by submitting to them; he endured the cross, despising it and the shame of it; and he overcame the good things of it by being wholly dead to them; its honours had no beauty in his eye, its pleasures no charms. Never was there such a conqueror of the world as Christ was, and we ought to be encouraged by it, (1.) Because Christ has overcome the world before us; so that we may look upon it as a conquered enemy, that has many a time been baffled. Nay, (2.) He has conquered it for us, as the captain of our salvation. We are interested in his victory; by his cross the world is *crucified to us,* which bespeaks it completely conquered and put into our possession; all is yours,

even *the world.* Christ having overcome the world, believers have nothing to do but to pursue their victory, and divide the spoil; and this we do by faith, 1 John v. 4. *We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

CHAP. XVII.

This chapter is a prayer, it is the Lord's prayer, the Lord Christ's prayer. There was one Lord's prayer which he taught us to pray, and did not pray himself, for he needed not to pray for the forgiveness of sin; but this was properly and peculiarly his, and suited him only as a Mediator, and is a sample of his intercession, and yet is of use to us both for instruction and encouragement in prayer. Observe, I. The circumstances of the prayer, ver. 1. II. The prayer itself. 1. He prays for himself, ver. 1—5. 2. He prays for those that are his. And in this see, (1.) The general pleas with which he introduces his petitions for them, ver. 6—10. (2.) The particular petitions he puts up for them, [1.] That they might be kept, ver. 11—16. [2.] That they might be sanctified, ver. 17—19. [3.] That they might be united, ver. 11 and 20—23. [4.] That they might be glorified, ver. 24—26.

THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. 4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Here we have, I. The circumstances of this prayer, *v.* 1. Many a solemn prayer Christ made in the days of his flesh (sometimes he continued all night in prayer), but none of his prayers are recorded so fully as this. Observe,

1. The time when he prayed this prayer; when he had *spoken these words,* had given the foregoing farewell to his disciples, he prayed this prayer in their hearing; so that, (1.) It was a prayer after sermon; when he had spoken from God to them, he turned to speak to God for them. Note, Those we preach to we must pray for. He that was to prophesy upon the dry bones was also to pray, *Come, O breath, and breathe* upon them. And the word preached should be prayed over, for God *gives the increase.* (2.) It was a prayer after sacrament; after Christ and his disciples had eaten the passover and the Lord's supper together, and he had given them a suitable exhortation, he closed the solemnity with this prayer, that God would preserve the good impressions of the ordinance upon them. (3.) It was a family-prayer. Christ's disciples were his family, and, to set a good example before masters of families, he not only, as a son of Abraham, taught his household (Gen. xviii. 19), but, as a son of David, blessed his household (2 Sam. vi. 20), prayed for them and with them. (4.) It was a parting prayer. When we and our friends are parting, it is good to part with prayer, Acts xx. 36. Christ was parting by death, and that parting should be sanctified and sweetened by prayer. Dying Jacob blessed the twelve patriarchs, dying Moses the twelve tribes, and so, here, dying Jesus the twelve apostles. (5.) It was a prayer that was a preface to his sacrifice, which he was now about to offer on earth, specifying the favours and blessings designed to be purchased by the merit of his death for those that were his; like a deed *leading the uses of a fine,* and directing to what intents and purposes it shall be levied. Christ prayed then as a priest now offering sacrifice, in the virtue of which all prayers were to be made. (6.) It was a prayer that was a specimen of his intercession, which he ever lives to make for us within the veil. Not that in his exalted state he addresses himself to his Father by way of humble petition, as when he was on earth. No, his intercession in heaven is a presenting of his merit to his Father, with a suing out of the benefit of it for all his chosen ones.

2. The outward expression of fervent desire which he used in this prayer: He *lifted up his eyes to heaven,* as before (*ch.* xi. 41); not that Christ needed thus to engage his own attention, but he was pleased thus to sanctify this gesture to those that use it, and justify it against those that ridicule it. It is significant of the lifting up of the soul to God in prayer, Ps. xxv. 1. *Sursum corda* was anciently used as a call to prayer, *Up with your hearts,* up to heaven; thither we must direct our desires in prayer, and thence we must expect to receive the good things we pray for.

II. The first part of the prayer itself, in which Christ prays for himself. Observe here,

1. He prays to God as a Father: He *lifted up his eyes, and said, Father.* Note, As prayer is to be made to God only, so it is our duty in prayer to eye him as a Father, and to call him *our Father.* All that have the Spirit of adoption are taught to cry *Abba, Father,* Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6. If God be our Father, we have liberty of access to him, ground of confidence in him, and great expectations from him. Christ calls him here *holy Father* (*v.* 11), and *righteous Father, v.* 25. For it will be of great use to us in prayer, both for direction and for encouragement, to call God as we hope to find him.

2. He prayed for himself first. Though Christ, as God, was prayed to, Christ, as man, prayed; thus *it became him to fulfil all righteousness.* It was said to him, as it is said to us, *Ask, and I will give thee,* Ps. ii. 8. What he had purchased he must ask for; and shall we expect to have what we never merited, but have a thousand times forfeited,

unless we pray for it? This puts an honour upon prayer, that it was the messenger Christ sent on his errands, the way in which even he corresponded with Heaven. It likewise gives great encouragement to praying people, and cause to hope that even the *prayer of the destitute* shall not be despised; time was when he that is advocate for us had a cause of his own to solicit, a great cause, on the success of which depended all his honour as Mediator; and this he was to solicit in the same method that is prescribed to us, *by prayers and supplications* (Heb. v. 7), so that he knows the heart of a petitioner (Exod. xxiii. 9), he knows the way. Now observe, Christ began with prayer for himself, and afterwards prayed for his disciples; this charity must begin at home, though it must not end there. We must love and pray for our neighbour as ourselves, and therefore must in a right manner love and pray for ourselves first. Christ was much shorter in his prayer for himself than in his prayer for his disciples. Our prayers for the church must not be crowded into a corner of our prayers; in making *supplication for all saints*, we have room enough to enlarge, and should not straiten ourselves. Now here are two petitions which Christ puts up for himself, and these two are one—that he might be glorified. But this one petition, *Glorify thou me*, is twice put up, because it has a double reference. To the prosecution of his undertaking further: *Glorify me, that I may glorify thee*, in doing what is agreed upon to be yet done, *v.* 1—3. And to the performance of his undertaking hitherto: "*Glorify me, for I have glorified thee.* I have done my part, and now, Lord, do thine," *v.* 4, 5.

(1.) Christ here prays to be *glorified*, in order to his *glorifying God* (*v.* 1): *Glorify thy Son* according to thy promise, *that thy Son may glorify thee* according to his undertaking. Here observe,

[1.] What he prays for—that he might be glorified in this world: "*The hour is come* when all the powers of darkness will combine to vilify thy Son; now, Father, glorify him." The Father glorified the *Son* upon earth, *First*, Even in his sufferings, by the signs and wonders which attended them. When they that came to take him were thunder-struck with a word,—when Judas confessed him innocent, and sealed that confession with his own guilty blood,—when the judge's wife asleep, and the judge himself awake, pronounced him righteous,—when the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple rent, then the Father not only justified, but glorified the Son. Nay, *Secondly*, Even by his sufferings; when he was crucified, he was magnified, he was glorified, *ch.* xiii. 31. It was in his cross that he conquered Satan and death; his thorns were a crown, and Pilate in the inscription over his head wrote more than he thought. But, *Thirdly*, Much more after his sufferings. The Father glorified the Son when he *raised him from the dead*, showed him openly to chosen witnesses, and poured out the Spirit to support and plead his cause, and to set up his kingdom among men, then he *glorified him.* This he here prays for, and insists upon.

[2.] What he pleads to enforce this request.

First, He pleads relation: *Glorify thy Son;* thy Son as God, as Mediator. It is in consideration of this that the heathen are *given him for his inheritance;* for *thou art my Son*, Ps. ii. 7, 8. The devil had tempted him to renounce his sonship with an offer of the kingdoms of this world; but he rejected the offer with disdain, and depended upon his Father for his preferment, and here applies himself to him for it. Note, Those that have received the adoption of sons may in faith pray for the inheritance of sons; if sanctified, then glorified: *Father, glorify thy Son.*

Secondly, He pleads the time: *The hour is come;* the season prefixed to an hour. The hour of Christ's passion was determined in the counsel of God. He had often said his hour was not yet come; but now it was come, and he knew it. *Man knows not his time* (Eccl. ix. 12), but the Son of man did. He calls it *this hour* (*ch.* xii. 27), and here *the hour;* compare Mark xiv. 35; *ch.* xvi. 21. For the hour of the Redeemer's death, which was also the hour of the Redeemer's birth, was the most signal and remarkable hour, and, without doubt, the most critical, that ever was since the clock of time was first set a going. Never was there such an hour as that, nor did ever any hour challenge such expectations of it before, nor such reflections upon it after. 1. "*The hour is come* in the midst of which I need to be owned." Now is the hour when this grand affair is come to a crisis; after many a skirmish the decisive battle between heaven and hell is now to be fought, and that great cause in which God's honour and man's happiness are together embarked must now be either won or lost for ever. The two champions David and Goliath, Michael and the dragon, are now entering the lists; the trumpet sounds for an engagement that will be irretrievably fatal either to the one or to the other: "*Now glorify thy Son*, now give him victory over *principalities and powers*, now let *the bruising of his heel* be *the breaking of the serpent's head*, now let thy Son be so upheld as not to fail nor be discouraged." When Joshua went *forth conquering and to conquer*, it is said, *The Lord magnified Joshua;* so he *glorified his Son* when he made the cross his triumphant chariot. 2. "*The hour is come* in the close of which I expect to be crowned; *the hour is come* when I am *to be glorified*, and *set at thy right hand.*" Betwixt him and that glory there intervened a bloody scene of suffering; but, being short, he speaks as if he made little of it: *The hour is come that I must be glorified;* and he did not expect it

till then. Good Christians in a trying hour, particularly a dying hour, may thus plead: "*Now the hour is come*, stand by me, appear for me, now or never; now *the earthly tabernacle is to be dissolved, the hour is come that I should be glorified.*" 2 Cor. v. 1.

Thirdly, He pleads the Father's own interest and concern herein: *That thy Son may also glorify thee;* for he had consecrated his whole undertaking to his Father's honour. He desired to be carried triumphantly through his sufferings to his glory, that he might glorify the Father two ways:—1. By *the death of the cross*, which he was now to suffer. *Father, glorify thy name*, expressed the great intention of his sufferings, which was to retrieve his Father's injured honour among men, and, by his satisfaction, to come up to the glory of God, which man, by his sin, came short of: "Father, own me in my sufferings, that I may honour thee by them." 2. By the doctrine of the cross, which was now shortly to be published to the world, by which God's kingdom was to be re-established among men. He prays that his Father would so grace his sufferings, and crown them, as not only to take off *the offence of the cross*, but to make it, *to those that are saved, the wisdom of God and the power of God.* If God had not glorified Christ crucified, *by raising him from the dead*, his whole undertaking had been crushed; therefore *glorify me, that I may glorify thee.* Now hereby he hath taught us, (1.) What to eye and aim at in our prayers, in all our designs and desires—and that is, the honour of God. It being our chief end to glorify God, other things must be sought and attended to in subordination and subserviency to the Lord. "Do this and the other for thy servant, that thy servant may glorify thee. Give me health, that I may glorify thee with my body; success, that I may glorify thee with my estate," &c. *Hallowed be thy name* must be our first petition, which must fix our end in all our other petitions, 1 Peter iv. 11. (2.) He hath taught us what to expect and hope for. If we sincerely set ourselves to glorify our Father, he will not be wanting to do that for us which is requisite to put us into a capacity of glorifying him, to give us the grace he knows sufficient, and the opportunity he sees convenient. But, if we secretly honour ourselves more than him, it is just with him to leave us in the hand of our own counsels, and then, instead of honouring ourselves, we shall shame ourselves.

Fourthly, He pleads his commission (*v.* 2, 3); he desires to glorify his Father, in conformity to, and in pursuance of, the commission given him: "*Glorify thy Son, as thou hast given him power, glorify him in the execution of the powers thou hast given him*, so it is connected with the petition; or, *that thy Son may glorify thee* according *to the power given him*, so it is connected with the plea. Now see here the power of the Mediator.

a. The origin of his power: *Thou hast given him power;* he has it from God, *to whom all power belongs.* Man, in his fallen state, must, in order to his recovery, be taken under a new model of government, which could not be erected but by a special commission under the broad seal of heaven, directed to the undertaker of that glorious work, and constituting him sole arbitrator of the grand difference that was, and sole guarantee of the grand alliance that was to be, between God and man; so as to this office, he received his power, which was to be executed in a way distinct from his power and government as Creator. Note, The church's king is no usurper, as the prince of this world is; Christ's right to rule is incontestable.

b. The extent of his power: He has *power over all flesh.* (*a.*) Over all mankind. He has power in and over the world of spirits, the powers of the upper and unseen world are subject to him (1 Peter iii. 22); but, being now mediating between God and man, he here *pleads his power over all flesh.* They were men whom he was to subdue and save; out of that race he had a remnant given him, and therefore all that rank of beings was *put under his feet.* (*b.*) Over mankind considered as corrupt and fallen, for so he is called *flesh*, Gen. vi. 3. If he had not in this sense been flesh, he had not needed a Redeemer. Over this sinful race the Lord Jesus has all power; and *all judgment*, concerning them, *is committed to him;* power to bind or loose, acquit or condemn; *power on earth to forgive sins* or not. Christ, as Mediator, has the government of the whole world put into his hand; he is king of nations, has power even over those *that know him not, nor obey his gospel;* whom he does not rule, he over-rules, Ps. xxii. 28; lxxii. 8; Matt. xxviii. 18; *ch.* iii. 35.

c. The grand intention and design of this power: *That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* Here is the mystery of our salvation laid open.

(*a.*) Here is the Father making over the elect to the Redeemer, and giving them to him as his charge and trust; as the crown and recompence of his undertaking. He has a sovereign power over all the fallan race, but a peculiar interest in the chosen remnant; *all things were put under his feet*, but they were *delivered into his hand.*

(*b.*) Here is the Son undertaking to secure the happiness of those that were given him, that he would *give eternal life to them.* See how great the authority of the Redeemer is. He has lives and crowns to give, eternal lives that never die, immortal crowns that never fade. Now consider how great the Lord Jesus is, who has such preferments in his gift; and how gracious he is in giving eternal life to those whom he undertakes to save. [*a.*] He sanctifies them in this world, gives them the spiritual life which is eternal

life in the bud and embryo, *ch.* iv. 14. Grace in the soul is heaven in that soul. [*b.*] He will glorify them in the other world; their happiness shall be completed in the vision and fruition of God. This only is mentioned, because it supposes all the other parts of his undertaking, teaching them, satisfying for them, sanctifying them, and preparing them for that eternal life; and indeed all the other were in order to this; we are *called to his kingdom and glory*, and *begotten to the inheritance.* What is last in execution was first in intention, and *that is eternal life.*

(*c.*) Here is the subserviency of the Redeemer's universal dominion to this: He has *power over all flesh*, on purpose that he might give eternal life to the select number. Note, Christ's dominion over the children of men is in order to the salvation of the children of God. *All things are for their sakes*, 2 Cor. iv. 15. All Christ's laws, ordinances, and promises, which are given to all, are designed effectually to convey spiritual life, and secure eternal life, to all that were given to Christ; he is *head over all things to the church.* The administration of the kingdoms of providence and grace are put into the same hand, that all things may be made to concur for good to the called.

d. Here is a further explication of this grand design (*v.* 3): "*This is life eternal*, which I am empowered and have undertaken to give, this is the nature of it, and this the way leading to it, *to know thee the only true God*, and all the discoveries and principles of natural religion, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, as Mediator, and the doctrines and laws of that holy religion which he instituted for the recovery of man out of his lapsed state." Here is,

(*a.*) The great end which the Christian religion sets before us, and that is, eternal life, the happiness of an immortal soul in the vision and fruition of an eternal God. This he was to reveal to all, and secure to all that were given him. By the gospel *life and immortality are brought to light*, are brought to hand, a life which transcends this as much in excellency as it does in duration.

(*b.*) The sure way of attaining this blessed end, which is, by the right knowledge of God and Jesus Christ: "*This is life eternal, to know thee*, which may be taken two ways: —[*a.*] *Life eternal* lies in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ; the present principle of this life is the believing knowledge of God and Christ; the future perfection of that life will be the intuitive knowledge of God and Christ. Those that are brought into union with Christ, and live a life of communion with God in Christ, know, in some measure, by experience, what eternal life is, and will say, "If this be heaven, heaven is sweet." See Ps. xvii. 15. [*b.*] The knowledge of God and Christ leads to life eternal; this is the way in which Christ gives eternal life, by the knowledge of him that has called us (2 Peter i.3), and this is the way in which we come to receive it. The Christian religion shows us the way to heaven, *First*, By directing us to God, as the author and felicity of our being; for Christ died to *bring us to God.* To know him as our Creator, and to love him, obey him, submit to him, and trust in him, as our owner ruler, and benefactor,—to devote ourselves to him as our sovereign Lord, depend upon him as our chief good, and direct all to his praise as our highest end,—*this is life eternal.* God is here called the *only true God*, to distinguish him from the false gods of the heathen, which were counterfeits and pretenders, not from the person of the Son, of whom it is expressly said that he is *the true God and eternal life* (1 John v. 20), and who in this text is proposed as the object of the same religious regard with the Father. It is certain there is but one only living and true God, and the God we adore is he. He is the true God, and not a mere name or notion; the only true God, and all that ever set up as rivals with him are vanity and a lie; the service of him is the only true religion. *Secondly*, By directing us to Jesus Christ, as the Mediator between God and man: *Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* If man had continued innocent, the knowledge of the only true God would have been life eternal to him; but now that he is fallen there must be something more; now that we are under guilt, to know God is to know him as a righteous Judge, whose curse we are under; and nothing is more killing than to know this. We are therefore concerned to know Christ as our Redeemer, by whom alone we can now have access to God; it is life eternal to believe in Christ; and this he has undertaken to give to as many as were given him. See *ch.* vi. 39, 40. Those that are acquainted with God and Christ are already in the suburbs of life eternal.

(2.) Christ here prays to be glorified in consideration of his having glorified the Father hitherto, *v.* 4, 5. The meaning of the former petition was, Glorify me in this world; the meaning of the latter is, Glorify me in the other world. *I have glorified thee on the earth, and now glorify thou me.* Observe here,

[1.] Withwhat comfort Christ reflects on the life he had lived on earth: *I have glorified thee, and finished my work;* it is as good as finished. He does not complain of the poverty and disgrace he had lived in, what a weary life he had upon earth, as ever any man of sorrows had. He overlooks this, and pleases himself in reviewing the service he had done his Father, and the progress he had made in his undertaking. This is here recorded, *First*, For the honour of Christ, that his life upon earth did in all respects fully answer the end of his coming into the world. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus had work given him to do by him that sent him; he came

not into the world to live at ease, but to go *about doing good,* and to *fulfil all righteousness.* His Father gave him his work, his work in the vineyard, both appointed him to it and assisted him in it. 2. *The work that was given him to do* he finished. Though he had not, as yet, gone through the last part of his undertaking, yet he was so near being *made perfect through sufferings* that he might say, I have finished it; it was as good as done, he was giving it its finishing stroke, ἐτελείωσα—*I have finished.* The word signifies his performing every part of his undertaking in the most complete and perfect manner. 3. Herein he glorified his Father; he pleased him, he praised him. It is the glory of God that *his work is perfect,* and the same is the glory of the Redeemer; what he is the author of he will be the finisher of. It was a strange way for the Son to glorify the Father by abasing himself (this looked more likely to disparage him), yet it was contrived that so he should glorify him: "*I have glorified thee on the earth,* in such a way as men on earth could bear the manifestation of thy glory." *Secondly,* It is recorded for example to all, *that we may follow his example.* 1. We must make it our business to do the work God has appointed us to do, according to our capacity and the sphere of our activity; we must each of us do all the good we can in this world. 2. We must aim at the glory of God in all. We must glorify him on the earth, which he has given *unto the children of men,* demanding only this quit-rent; on the earth, where we are in a state of probation and preparation for eternity. 3. We must persevere herein to the end of our days; we must not sit down till we have finished our work, and *accomplished as a hireling our day. Thirdly,* It is recorded for encouragement to all those that rest upon him. If he has *finished the work that was given him to do,* then he is a complete Saviour, and did not do his work by the halves. And he that finished his work for us will finish it in us *to the day of Christ.*

[2.] See with what confidence he expects *the joy set before him* (*v.* 5): *Now, O Father, glorify thou me.* It is what he depends upon, and cannot be denied him.

First, See here what he prayed for: *Glorify thou me,* as before, *v.* 1. All repetitions in prayer are not to be counted *vain repetitions;* Christ *prayed, saying the same words* (Matt. xxvi. 44), and yet *prayed more earnestly.* What his Father had promised him, and he was assured of, yet he must pray for; promises are not designed to supersede prayers, but to be the guide of our desires and the ground of our hopes. Christ's being glorified includes all the honours, powers, and joys, of his exalted state. See how it is described. 1. It is a glory with God; not only, *Glorify my name on earth,* but, *Glorify me with thine own self.* It was paradise, it was heaven, to be with his Father, as Prov. viii. 30; Dan. vii. 13; Heb. viii. 1. Note, The brightest glories of the exalted Redeemer were to be displayed within the veil, where the Father manifests his glory. The praises of the upper world are offered up *to him that sits upon the throne and to the Lamb* in conjunction (Rev. v. 13), and the prayers of the lower world draw out grace and peace *from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ* in conjunction; and thus the Father has glorified him with himself. 2. It is *the glory he had with God before the world was.* By this it appears, (1.) That Jesus Christ, as God, had a being *before the world was,* co-eternal with the Father; our religion acquaints us with one that *was before all things, and by whom all things consist.* (2.) That his glory with the Father is from everlasting, as well as his existence with the Father; for he was from eternity *the brightness of his Father's glory,* Heb. i. 3. As God's making the world only declared his glory, but made no real additions to it; so Christ undertook the work of redemption, not because he needed glory, for he had a glory *with the Father before the world,* but because we needed glory. (3.) That Jesus Christ in his state of humiliation divested himself of this glory, and drew a veil over it; though he was still God, yet he was *God manifested in the flesh,* not in his glory. He laid down this glory for a time, as a pledge that he would go through with his undertaking, according to the appointment of his Father. (4.) That in his exalted state he resumed this glory, and clad himself again with his former robes of light. Having performed his undertaking, he did, as it were, *reposcere pignus—take up his pledge,* by this demand, *Glorify thou me.* He prays that even his human nature might be advanced to the highest honour it was capable of, his body a glorious body; and that the glory of the Godhead might now be manifested in the person of the Mediator, Emmanuel, God-man. He does not pray to be glorified with the princes and great men of the earth: no; he that knew both worlds, and might choose which he would have his preferment in, chose it in the glory of the other world, as far exceeding all the glory of this. He had despised *the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them,* when Satan offered them to him, and therefore might the more boldly claim the glories of the other world. *Let the same mind be in us.* "Lord, give the glories of this world to whom thou wilt give them, but let me have my portion of glory in the world to come. It is no matter, though I be vilified with men; but, *Father, glorify thou me with thine own self.*"

Secondly, See here what he pleaded: *I have glorified thee;* and now, in consideration thereof, *glorify thou me.* For, 1 There was an equity in it, and an admirable becomingness, *that, if God was glorified in him, he should glorify him in himself,* as he had observed, *ch.* xiii. 32. Such an infinite value there was in what Christ did

to glorify his Father that he properly merited all the glories of his exalted state. If the Father was a gainer in his glory by the Son's humiliation, it was fit the Son should be no loser by it, at long run, in his glory. 2. It was according to the covenant between them, that if the Son would *make his soul an offering for sin* he should *divide the spoil with the strong* (Isa. liii. 10, 12), and *the kingdom should be his*; and this he had an eye to, and depended upon, in his sufferings; it was *for the joy set before him* that *he endured the cross:* and now in his exalted state he still expects the completing of his exaltation, because he perfected his undertaking, Heb. x. 13. 3. It was the most proper evidence of his Father's accepting and approving the work he had finished. By the glorifying of Christ we are satisfied that God was satisfied, and therein a real demonstration was given that his Father was well pleased in him as his beloved Son. 4. Thus we must be taught that those, and only those, who glorify God on earth, and persevere in the work God hath given them to do, shall be glorified with the Father, when they must be no more in this world. Not that we can merit that glory, as Christ did, but our glorifying God is required as an evidence of our interest in Christ, through whom eternal life is God's free gift.

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. 7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. 8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them,* and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. 9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. 10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

Christ, having prayed for himself, comes next to pray for those that are his, and he knew them by name, though he did not here name them. Now observe here,

I. Whom he did not pray for (*v.* 9): *I pray not for the world.* Note, There is a world of people that Jesus Christ did not pray for. It is not meant of the world of mankind in general (he prays for that here, *v.* 21, *That the world may believe that thou hast sent me);* nor is it meant of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews; but the world is here opposed to the elect, who are given to Christ out of the world. Take the world for a heap of unwinnowed corn in the floor, and God loves it, Christ prays for it, and dies for it, *for a blessing is in it;* but, *the Lord perfectly knowing those that are his,* he eyes particularly those *that were given him out of the world,* extracts them; and then take the world for the remaining heap of rejected, worthless chaff, and Christ neither prays for it, nor dies for it, but abandons it, and *the wind drives it away.* These are called *the world,* because they are governed by the spirit of this world, and have their portion in it; for these Christ does not pray; not but that there are some things which he intercedes with God for on their behalf, as the dresser for the reprieve of the barren tree; but he does not pray for them in this prayer, they *have no part nor lot* in the blessings here prayed for. He does not say, I pray against the world, as Elias made intercession against Israel; but, *I pray not for them,* I pass them by, and leave them to themselves; they *are not written in the Lamb's book of life,* and therefore not in the breast-plate of the great high-priest. And miserable is the condition of such, as it was of those whom the prophet was forbidden to pray for, and more so, Jer. vii. 16. We that know not who are chosen, and who are passed by, must *pray for all men,* 1 Tim. ii. 1, 4. While there is life, there is hope, and room for prayer. See 1 Sam. xii. 23.

II. Whom he did pray for; not for angels, but for the children of men. 1. He prays *for those that were given him,* meaning primarily the disciples that had attended *him in the regeneration;* but it is doubtless to be extended further, to all who come under the same character, who receive and believe the words of Christ, *v.* 6, 8. 2. He prays *for all that should believe on him* (*v.* 20), and it is not only the petitions that follow, but those also which went before, that must be construed to extend to all believers, in every place and every age; for he has a concern for them all, and calls *things that are not as though they were.*

III. What encouragement he had to pray for them, and what are the general pleas with which he introduces his petitions for them, and recommends them to his Father's favour; they are five:—

1. The charge he had received concerning them: *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me* (*v.* 6), and again (*v.* 9), *Those whom thou hast given me.* "Father, those I am now praying for are such as thou hast entrusted me with, and what I have to say for them is in pursuance of the charge I have received concerning them." Now,

(1.) This is meant primarily of the disciples that then were, who were given to Christ as his pupils to be educated by him while he was on earth, and his agents to be employed for him when he went to heaven. They were given him to be the learners of his doctrine, the witnesses of his life and miracles, and the monuments of his grace and favour, in

order to their being the publishers of his gospel and the planters of his church. When they left all to follow him, this was the secret spring of that strange resolution: they were given to him, else they had not given themselves to him. Note, The apostleship and ministry, which are Christ's gift to the church, were first the Father's gift to Jesus Christ. As under the law the Levites were given to Aaron (Num. iii 9), to him (the *great high-priest of our profession)* the Father gave the apostles first, and ministers in every age, *to keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, and to do the service of the tabernacle.* See Eph. iv. 8, 11; Ps. lxviii. 18. Christ received this gift for men, that he might give it to men. As this puts a great honour upon the ministry of the gospel, and magnifies that office, which is so much vilified; so it lays a mighty obligation upon the ministers of the gospel to devote themselves entirely to Christ's service, as being *given to him,*

(2.) But it is designed to extend to all the elect, for they are elsewhere said to be given to Christ (*ch.* vi. 37, 39), and he often laid a stress upon this, that those he was to save were given to him as his charge; to his care they were committed, from his hand they were expected, and concerning them he received commandments. He here shows,

[1.] That the Father had authority to give them: *Thine they were.* He did not give that which was none of his own, but covenanted that he had a good title. The elect, whom the Father gave to Christ, were his own in three ways:—*First,* They were creatures, and their lives and beings were derived from him. When they were given to Christ to be *vessels of honour,* they were *in his hand, as clay in the hand of the potter,* to be disposed of as God's wisdom saw most for God's glory. *Secondly,* They were criminals, and their lives and beings were forfeited to him. It was a remnant of fallen mankind that was given to Christ to be redeemed, that might have been made sacrifices to justice when they were pitched upon to be the *monuments of mercy;* might justly have been *delivered to the tormentors* when they were delivered to the Saviour. *Thirdly,* They were chosen, and their lives and beings were designed, for him; they were set apart for God, and were consigned to Christ as his agent. This he insists upon again (*v.* 7): *All things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee,* which, though it may take in all that appertained to his office as Mediator, yet seems especially to be meant of those that were given him. "They *are of thee,* their being is of thee as the God of nature, their well-being is of thee as the God of grace; they *are all of thee,* and therefore, Father, I bring them all to thee, that they may be all for thee."

[2.] That he did accordingly give them to the Son: *Thou gavest them to me,* as sheep to the shepherd, to be kept; as patients to the physician, to be cured; children to a tutor, to be educated; thus he will deliver up his charge (Heb. ii. 13), *The children thou hast given me.* They were delivered to Christ, *First,* That the election of grace might not be frustrated, *that not one,* no not *of the little ones, might perish.* That great concern must be lodged in some one good hand, able to give sufficient security, *that the purpose of God according to election might stand. Secondly,* That the undertaking of Christ might not be fruitless; they were *given to him as his seed,* in whom he should *see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied* (Isa. liii. 10, 11), and might not *spend his strength,* and shed his blood, *for nought, and in vain,* Isa. xlix. 4. We may plead, as Christ does, "Lord, keep my graces, keep my comforts, for *thine they were, and thou gavest them to me.*"

2. The care he had taken of them to teach them (*v.* 6): *I have manifested thy name to them. I have given to them the words which thou gavest to me, v.* 8. Observe here,

(1.) The great design of Christ's doctrine, which was to manifest God's name, to declare him (*ch.* i. 18), to instruct the ignorant, and rectify the mistakes of a dark and foolish world concerning God, that he might be better loved and worshipped.

(2.) His faithful discharge of this undertaking: *I have* done it. His fidelity appears, [1.] In the truth of his doctrine. It agreed exactly with the instructions he received from his Father. He gave not only the things, but the very *words, that were given him.* Ministers, in wording their message, must have an eye to *the words which the Holy Ghost teaches.* [2.] In the tendency of his doctrine, which was to manifest God's name. He did not seek himself, but, in all he did and said, aimed to magnify his Father. Note, *First,* It is Christ's prerogative to manifest God's name to the souls of the children of men. *No man knows the Father, but he to whom the Son will reveal him,* Matt. xi. 27. He only has acquaintance with the Father, and so is able to open the truth; and he only has access to the spirits of men, and so is able to open the understanding. Ministers may *publish the name of the Lord* (as Moses, Deut. xxxii. 3), but Christ only can manifest that name. By the word of Christ God is revealed to us; by the Spirit of Christ God is revealed in us. Ministers may speak the words of God to us, but Christ can give us his words, can put them in us, as food, as treasure. *Secondly,* Sooner or later, Christ will manifest God's name to all that were given him, and will give them his word, to be the seed of their new birth, the support of their spiritual life, and the earnest of their everlasting bliss.

3. The good effect of the care he had taken of them, and the pains he had taken with them (*v.* 6): *They have kept thy word* (*v.* 7), *they have known that all things are of thee* (*v.* 8); *they have received thy words,* and em-

braced them, have given their assent and consent to them, *and have known surely that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou didst send me.* Observe here,

(1.) What success the doctrine of Christ had among those *that were given to him,* in several particulars:—

[1.] "They have received the words which I gave them, as the ground receives the seed, and the earth drinks in the rain." They attended to the words of Christ, apprehended in some measure the meaning of them, and were affected with them: they received the impression of them. The word was to them an *ingrafted word.*

[2.] "*They have kept thy word,* have continued in it; they have conformed to it." Christ's commandment is then only kept when it is obeyed. Those that have to teach others the commands of Christ ought to be themselves observant of them. It was requisite that these should *keep what was committed to them,* for it was to be transmitted by them to every place for every age.

[3.] "They have understood the word, and have been sensible on what ground they went in receiving and keeping it. They have been aware that thou art the original author of that holy religion which I am come to institute, *that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.*" All Christ's offices and powers, all the gifts of the Spirit, all his graces and comforts, which God *gave without measure to him,* were all from God, contrived by his wisdom, appointed by his will, and designed by his grace, for his own glory in man's salvation. Note, It is a great satisfaction to us, in our reliance upon Christ, that he, and all he is and has, all he said and did, all he is doing and will do, are of God, 1 Cor. i. 30. We may therefore venture our souls upon Christ's mediation, for it has a good bottom. If the righteousness be of God's appointing, we shall be justified; if the grace be of his dispensing, we shall be sanctified.

[4.] They have set their seal to it: *They have known surely that I came out from God, v.* 8. See here, *First,* What it is to believe; it is to *know surely,* to know *that it is so of a truth.* The disciples were very weak and defective in knowledge; yet Christ, who knew them better than they knew themselves, passes his word for them that they did believe. Note, We may know surely that which we neither do nor can know fully; may *know the certainty of the things which are not seen,* though we cannot particularly describe the nature of them. *We walk by faith,* which knows surely, *not* yet *by sight,* which knows clearly. *Secondly,* What it is we are to believe: *that Jesus Christ came out from God,* as he is the Son of God, in his person *the image of the invisible God,* and that God did send him; that in his undertaking he is the ambassador of the eternal king: so that the Christian religion stands upon the same footing, and is of equal authority, with natural religion; and therefore all the doctrines of Christ are to be received as divine truths, all his commands obeyed as divine laws, and all his promises depended upon as divine securities.

(2.) How Jesus Christ here speaks of this: he enlarges upon it, [1.] As pleased with it himself. Though the many instances of his disciples' dulness and weakness had grieved him, yet their constant adherence to him, their gradual improvements, and their great attainments at last, were his joy. Christ is a Master that delights in the proficiency of his scholars. He accepts the sincerity of their faith, and graciously passes by the infirmity of it. See how willing he is to make the best of us, and to say the best of us, thereby encouraging our faith in him, and teaching us charity to one another. [2.] As pleading it with his Father. He is praying for *those that were given to him;* and he pleads that they had given themselves to him. Note, The due improvement of grace received is a good plea, according to the tenour of the new covenant, for further grace; for so runs the promise, *To him that hath shall be given.* Those that keep Christ's word, and believe on him, let Christ alone to commend them, and, which is more, to recommend them to his Father.

4. He pleads the Father's own interest in them (*v.* 9): *I pray for them, for they are thine;* and this by virtue of a joint and mutual interest, which he and the Father have in what pertained to each: *All mine are thine, and thine are mine.* Between the Father and Son there can be no dispute (as there is among the children of men) about *meum* and *tuum—mine and thine,* for the matter was settled from eternity; *all mine are thine, and thine are mine.* Here is,

(1.) The plea particularly urged for his disciples: *They are thine.* The consigning of the elect to Christ was so far from making them less the Father's that it was in order to making them the more so. Note, [1.] All that receive Christ's word, and believe in him, are taken into covenant-relation to the Father, and are looked upon as his; Christ presents them to him, and they, through Christ, present themselves to him. Christ has *redeemed us,* not to himself only, but *to God, by his blood,* Rev. v. 9, 10. They are *first-fruits unto God,* Rev. xiv. 4. [2.] This is a good plea in prayer, Christ here pleads it, *They are thine;* we may plead it for ourselves, *I am thine, save me;* and for others (as Moses, Exod. xxxii. 11), "*They are thy people. They are thine;* wilt thou not provide for thine own? Wilt thou not secure them, that they may not be run down by the devil and the world? Wilt thou not secure thy interest in them, that they may not depart from thee? *They are thine,* own them as thine."

(2.) The foundation on which this plea is

grounded: *All mine are thine, and thine are mine.* This bespeaks the Father and Son to be, [1.] One in essence. Every creature must say to God, *All mine are thine;* but none can say to him, *All thine are mine,* but he that is the same in substance with him, and equal in power and glory. [2.] One in interest; no separate or divided interests between them. *First,* What the Father has as Creator is delivered over to the Son, to be used and disposed of in subserviency to his great undertaking. *All things are delivered to him* (Matt xi. 27); the grant is so general that nothing is excepted but *he that did put all things under him. Secondly,* What the Son has as Redeemer is designed for the Father, and his kingdom shall shortly be delivered up to him. All the benefits of redemption, purchased by the Son, are intended for the Father's praise, and in his glory all the lines of his undertaking centre: *All mine are thine.* The Son owns none for his that are not devoted to the service of the Father; nor will any thing be accepted as a piece of service to the Christian religion which clashes with the dictates and laws of natural religion. In a limited sense, every true believer may say, *All thine are mine;* if God be ours in covenant, all he is and has is so far ours that it shall be engaged for our good; and in an unlimited sense every true believer does say, Lord, *all mine are thine;* all laid at his feet, to be serviceable to him. And what we have may be comfortably committed to God's care and blessing when it is cheerfully submitted to his government and disposal: "Lord, take care of what I have, for it is *all thine.*"

5. He pleads his own concern in them: *I am glorified in them—δεδόξασμαι.* (1.) *I have been glorified in them.* What little honour Christ had in this world was among his disciples; he had been glorified by their attendance on him and obedience to him, their preaching and working miracles in his name; and therefore *I pray for them.* Note, Those shall have an interest in Christ's intercession in and by whom he is glorified. (2.) "*I am to be glorified in them,* when I am gone to heaven; they are to bear up my name." The apostles preached and wrought miracles *in Christ's name; the Spirit in them glorified Christ* (*ch.* xvi. 14): "*I am glorified in them,* and therefore," [1.] "I concern myself for them." What little interest Christ has in this degenerate world lies in his church; and therefore it and all its affairs lie near his heart, within the veil. [2.] "Therefore I commit them to the Father, who has engaged to glorify the Son, and, upon this account, will have a gracious eye to those in whom he is glorified." That in which God and Christ are glorified may, with humble confidence, be committed to God's special care.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are.* 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

After the general pleas with which Christ recommended his disciples to his Father's care follow the particular petitions he puts up for them; and, 1. They all relate to spiritual blessings in heavenly things. He does not pray that they might be rich and great in the world, that they might raise estates and get preferments, but that they might be kept from sin, and furnished for their duty, and brought safely to heaven. Note, The prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity; for what relates to this Christ came to purchase and bestow, and so teaches us to seek, in the first place, both for others and for ourselves. 2. They are such blessings as were suited to their present state and case, and their various exigencies and occasions. Note, Christ's intercession is always pertinent. Our *advocate with the Father* is acquainted with all the particulars of our wants and burdens, our dangers and difficulties, and knows how to accommodate his intercession to each, as to Peter's peril, which he himself was not aware of (Luke xxii. 32), *I have prayed for thee.* 3. He is large and full in the petitions, orders them before his Father, and *fills his mouth with arguments,* to teach us fervency and importunity in prayer, to be large in prayer, and dwell upon our errands at the throne of grace, wrestling as Jacob, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

Now the first thing Christ prays for, for his disciples, is their preservation, in these verses, in order to which he commits them all to his Father's custody. Keeping supposes danger, and their danger arose *from the world,* the world wherein they were, *the evil* of this he begs they might be kept from. Now observe,

I. The request itself: *Keep them from the*

world. There were two ways of their being delivered from the world:—

1. By taking them out of it; and he does not pray that they might be so delivered: *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world;* that is,

(1.) "I pray not that they may be speedily removed by death." If the world will be vexatious to them, the readiest way to secure them would be to hasten them out of it to a better world, that will give them better treatment. Send chariots and horses of fire for them, to fetch them to heaven; Job, Elijah, Jonah, Moses, when that occurred which fretted them, prayed that they might be *taken out of the world;* but Christ would not pray so for his disciples, for two reasons:—[1.] Because he came to conquer, not to countenance, those intemperate heats and passions which make men impatient of life, and importunate for death. It is his will that we should take up our cross, and not outrun it. [2.] Because he had work for them to do in the world; the world, though sick of them (Acts xxii. 22), and therefore not worthy of them (Heb. xi. 38), yet could ill spare them. In pity therefore to this dark world, Christ would not have these lights removed out of it, but continued in it, especially for the sake of those in the world that were to *believe in him through their word.* Let not them be taken out of the world when their Master is; they must each in his own order die a martyr, but not till they have finished their testimony. Note, *First,* The taking of good people out of the world is a thing by no means to be desired, but rather dreaded and laid to heart, Isa. lvii. 1. *Secondly,* Though Christ loves his disciples, he does not presently send for them to heaven, as soon as they are effectually called, but leaves them for some time in this world, that they may do good and glorify God upon earth, and be ripened for heaven. Many good people are spared to live, because they can ill be spared to die.

(2.) "I pray not that they may be totally freed and exempted from the troubles of this world, and taken out of the toil and terror of it into some place of ease and safety, there to live undisturbed; this is not the preservation I desire for them." *Non ut omni molestia liberati otium et delicias colant, sed ut inter media pericula salvi tamen maneant Dei auxilio—Not that, being freed from all trouble, they may bask in luxurious ease, but that by the help of God they may be preserved in a scene of danger;* so Calvin. Not that they may be kept from all conflict with the world, but that they may not be overcome by it; not that, as Jeremiah wished, they might *leave their people, and go from them* (Jer. ix. 2), but that, like Ezekiel, *their faces may be strong against the faces of wicked men,* Ezek. iii. 8. It is more the honour of a Christian soldier by faith to *overcome the world* than by a monastical vow to retreat from it; and more for the honour of Christ to serve him in a city than to serve him in a cell.

2. Another way is by keeping them from the corruption that is in the world; and he prays they may be thus kept, *v.* 11, 15. Here are three branches of this petition:—

(1.) *Holy Father, keep those whom thou hast given me.*

[1.] Christ was now leaving them; but let them not think that their defence was departed from them; no, he does here, in their hearing, commit them to the custody of his Father and their Father. Note, It is the unspeakable comfort of all believers that Christ himself has committed them to the care of God. Those cannot but be safe whom the almighty God keeps, and he cannot but keep those whom the Son of his love commits to him, in the virtue of which we may by faith *commit the keeping of our souls to God,* 1 Pet. iv. 19; 2 Tim. i. 12. *First,* He here puts them under the divine protection, that they may not be run down by the malice of their enemies; that they and all their concerns may be the particular care of the divine Providence: "*Keep* their lives, till they have done their work; keep their comforts, and let them not be broken in upon by the hardships they meet with; keep up their interest in the world, and let it not sink." To this prayer is owing the wonderful preservation of the gospel ministry and gospel church in the world unto this day; if God had not graciously kept both, and kept up both, they had been extinguished and lost long ago. *Secondly,* He puts them under the divine tuition, that they may not themselves run away from their duty, nor be led aside by the treachery of their own hearts: "*Keep them* in their integrity, keep them disciples, keep them close to their duty." We need God's power not only to put us into a state of grace, but to keep us in it. See, *ch.* x. 28, 29; 1 Pet. i. 5.

[2.] The titles he gives to him he prays to, and them he prays for, enforce the petition. *First,* He speaks to God as a *holy Father.* In committing ourselves and others to the divine care, we may take encouragement, 1. From the attribute of his holiness, for this is engaged for the preservation of his holy ones; he hath *sworn by his holiness,* Ps. lxxxix. 35. If he be a holy God and hate sin, he will make those holy that are his, and keep them from sin, which they also hate and dread as the greatest evil. 2. From this relation of a Father, wherein he stands to us through Christ. If he be a Father, he will take care of his own children, will teach them and keep them; who else should? *Secondly,* He speaks of them as those whom the Father had *given him.* What we receive as our Father's gifts, we may comfortably remit to our Father's care. "Father, keep the graces and comforts thou hast given me; the children thou hast given me; the ministry *I have received.*"

(2.) *Keep* them *through thine own name*

That is, [1.] Keep them for thy name's sake; so some. "Thy name and honour are concerned in their preservation as well as mine, for both will suffer by it if they either revolt or sink." The Old-Testament saints often pleaded, for *thy name's sake;* and those may with comfort plead it that are indeed more concerned for the honour of God's name than for any interest of their own. [2.] Keep them in thy name; so others; the original is so, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί. "Keep them in the knowledge and fear of thy name; keep them in the profession and service of thy name, whatever it cost them. Keep them in the interest of thy name, and let them ever be faithful to this; keep them in thy truths, in thine ordinances, in the way of thy commandments." [3.] Keep them by or through thy name; so others. "Keep them by thine own power, in thine own hand; keep them thyself, undertake for them, let them be thine own immediate care. Keep them by those means of preservation which thou hast thyself appointed, and by which thou hast made thyself known. Keep them by thy word and ordinances; let thy name be their strong tower, thy tabernacle their pavilion."

(3.) *Keep them from the evil,* or out of the evil. He had taught them to pray daily, *Deliver us from evil,* and this would encourage them to pray. [1.] "Keep them from the evil one, the devil and all his instruments; that wicked one and all his children. Keep them from Satan as a tempter, that either he may not have leave to sift them, or that their faith may not fail. Keep them from him as a destroyer, that he may not drive them to despair." [2.] "Keep them from the evil thing, that is, sin; from every thing that looks like it, or leads to it. Keep them, that they do no evil," 2 Cor. xiii. 7. Sin is that evil which, above any other, we should dread and deprecate. [3.] "Keep them from the evil of the world, and of their tribulation in it, so that it may have no sting in it, no malignity;" not that they might be kept from affliction, but kept through it, that the property of their afflictions might be so altered as that there might be no evil in them, nothing to do them any harm.

II. The reasons with which he enforces these requests for their preservation, which are five:—

1. He pleads that hitherto he had kept them (*v.* 12): "*While I was with them in the world, I have kept them in thy name,* in the true faith of the gospel and the service of God; those that thou gavest me for my constant attendants I have kept, they are all safe, and none of them missing, none of them revolted nor ruined, *but the son of perdition;* he is lost, that the scripture might be fulfilled." Observe,

(1.) Christ's faithful discharge of his undertaking concerning his disciples: *While he was with them, he kept them,* and his care concerning them was not in vain. He kept them in God's name, preserved them from falling into any dangerous errors or sins, from striking in with the Pharisees, who would have *compassed sea and land to make proselytes* of them; he kept them from deserting him, and returning to the little all they had left for him; he had them still under his eye and care when he sent them to preach; *went not his heart with them?* Many that followed him awhile took offence at something or other, and went off; but he kept the twelve that they should not go away. He kept them from falling into the hands of persecuting enemies that sought their lives; kept them when he surrendered himself, *ch.* xviii. 9. *While he was with them,* he kept them in a visible manner by instructions still sounding in their ears, miracles still done before their eyes; when he was gone from them, they must be kept in a more spiritual manner. Sensible comforts and supports are sometimes given and sometimes withheld; but, when they are withdrawn, yet they are not left comfortless. What Christ here says of his immediate followers is true of all the saints while they are here in this world; Christ keeps them *in God's name.* It is implied, [1.] That they are weak, and cannot keep themselves; their own hands are not sufficient for them. [2.] That they are, in God's account, valuable and worth the keeping; precious in his sight and honourable; his treasure, his jewels. [3.] That their salvation is designed, for to this it is that they are kept, 1 Pet. i. 5. As the wicked are reserved for the day of evil, so the righteous are preserved for the day of bliss. [4.] That they are the charge of the Lord Jesus; for as his charge he keeps them, and exposed himself like the good shepherd for the preservation of the sheep.

(2.) The comfortable account he gives of his undertaking: *None of them is lost.* Note, Jesus Christ will certainly keep all that were given to him, so that none of them shall be totally and finally lost; they may think themselves lost, and may be nearly lost (in imminent peril); but it is the Father's will that he should *lose none,* and none he will lose (*ch.* vi. 39); so it will appear when they come all together, and none of them shall be wanting.

(3.) A brand put upon Judas, as none of those whom he had undertaken to keep. He was among those that were given to Christ, but not of them. He speaks of Judas as already lost, for he had abandoned the society of his Master and his fellow-disciples, and abandoned himself to the devil's guidance, and in a little time would *go to his own place;* he is as good as lost. But the apostasy and ruin of Judas were no reproach at all to his Master, or his family; for, [1.] He was *the son of perdition,* and therefore not one of those that were given to Christ to be kept. He deserved perdition, and God left him to throw himself headlong into it. He was the *son of the destroyer,* as Cain, *who was of that wicked*

one. That great enemy whom the Lord *will consume* is called a *son of perdition,* because he is a *man of sin,* 2 Thess. ii. 3. It is an awful consideration that one of the apostles proved a son of perdition. No man's place or name in the church, no man's privileges or opportunities of getting grace, no man's profession or external performances, will secure him from ruin, if his heart be not right with God; nor are any more likely to prove sons of perdition at last, after a plausible course of profession, than those that like Judas love the bag; but Christ's distinguishing Judas from those that were given him (for εἰ μὴ is adversative, not exceptive) intimates that the truth and true religion ought not to suffer for the treachery of those that are false to it, 1 John ii. 19. [2.] The scripture was fulfilled; the sin of Judas was foreseen of God's counsel and foretold in his word, and the event would certainly follow after the prediction as a consequent, though it cannot be said necessarily to follow from it as an effect. See Ps. xli. 9; lxix. 25; cix. 8. We should be amazed at the treachery of apostates, were we not *told of it before.*

2. He pleads that he was now under a necessity of leaving them, and could no longer watch over them in the way that he had hitherto done (*v.* 11): "Keep them now, that I may not lose the labour I bestowed upon them while I was with them. Keep them, *that they may be one* with us *as we are* with each other." We shall have occasion to speak of this, *v.* 21. But see here,

(1.) With what pleasure he speaks of his own departure. He expresses himself concerning it with an air of triumph and exultation, with reference both to the world he left and the world he removed to. [1.] "*Now I am no more in the world.* Now farewell to this provoking troublesome world. I have had enough of it, and now the welcome hour is at hand when I shall be *no more in it.* Now that I have finished the work I had to do in it, I have done with it; nothing remains now but to hasten out of it as fast as I can." Note, It should be a pleasure to those that have their home in the other world to think of being *no more in this world;* for when we have done what we have to do in this world, and are made meet for that, what is there here that should court our stay? When we receive a sentence of death within ourselves, with what a holy triumph should we say, "*Now I am no more in this world,* this dark deceitful world, this poor empty world, this tempting defiling world; no more vexed with its thorns and briars, no more endangered by its nets and snares; now I shall wander no more in this howling wilderness, be tossed no more on this stormy sea; *now I am no more in this world,* but can cheerfully quit it, and give it a final farewell." [2.] *Now I come to thee.* To get clear of the world is but the one half of the comfort of a dying Christ, of a dying Christian; the far better half is to think of going to the Father, to sit down in the immediate, uninterrupted, and everlasting enjoyment of him. Note, Those who love God cannot but be pleased to think of coming to him, though it be through the valley of the shadow of death. When we go, to be *absent from the body,* it is to be *present with the Lord,* like children fetched home from school to their father's house. "Now come I to thee whom I have chosen and served, and whom my soul thirsteth after; to thee the fountain of light and life, the crown and centre of bliss and joy; now my longings shall be satisfied, my hopes accomplished, my happiness completed, for *now come I to thee.*"

(2.) With what a tender concern he speaks of those whom he left behind: "*But these are in the world.* I have found what an evil world it is, what will become of these dear little ones that must stay in it? *Holy Father, keep them;* they will want my presence, let them have thine. They have now more need than ever to be kept, for I am sending them out further into the world than they have yet ventured; they must *launch forth into the deep,* and have business to do in these great waters, and will be lost if thou do not keep them." Observe here, [1.] That, when our Lord Jesus was going to the Father, he carried with him a tender concern for *his own that are in the world;* and continued to compassionate them. He bears their names upon his breast-plate, nay, upon his heart, and has *graven them* with the nails of his cross *upon the palms of his hands;* and when he is out of their sight they are not out of his, much less out of his mind. We should have such a pity for those that are launching out into the world when we are got almost through it, and for those that are left behind in it when we are leaving it. [2.] That, when Christ would express the utmost need his disciples had of divine preservation, he only says, *They are in the world;* this bespeaks danger enough to those who are bound for heaven, whom a flattering world would divert and seduce, and a malignant world would hate and persecute.

3. He pleads what a satisfaction it would be to them to know themselves safe, and what a satisfaction it would be to him to see them easy: *I speak this, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves, v.* 13. Observe,

(1.) Christ earnestly desired the fulness of the joy of his disciples, for it is his will that they should rejoice evermore. He was leaving them in tears and troubles, and yet took effectual care to *fulfil their joy.* When they thought their joy in him was brought to an end, then was it advanced nearer to perfection than ever it had been, and they were fuller of it. We are here taught, [1.] To found our joy in Christ: "It is *my joy,* joy of my giving, or rather joy that I am the matter of." Christ is a Christian's joy, his chief joy. Joy in the world is withering with it; joy in Christ is everlasting, like him. [2.]

To build up our joy with diligence; for it is the duty as well as privilege of all true believers; no part of the Christian life is pressed upon us more earnestly, Phil. iii 1; iv. 4. [3.] To aim at the perfection of this joy, that we may have it fulfilled in us, for this Christ would have.

(2.) In order hereunto, he did thus solemnly commit them to his Father's care and keeping and took them for witnesses that he did so: *These things I speak in the world*, while I am yet with them in the world. His intercession in heaven for their preservation would have been as effectual in itself; but saying this in the world would be a greater satisfaction and encouragement to them, and would enable them to *rejoice in tribulation*. Note, [1.] Christ has not only treasured up comforts for his people, in providing for their future welfare, but has given out comforts to them, and said that which will be for their present satisfaction. He here condescended in the presence of his disciples to publish his last will and testament, and (which many a testator is shy of) lets them know what legacies he had left them, and how well they were secured, that they might have strong consolation. [2.] Christ's intercession for us is enough to fulfil our joy in him; nothing more effectual to silence all our fears and mistrusts, and to furnish us with strong consolation, than this, that he always appears in the presence of God for us; therefore the apostle puts a *yea rather* upon this, Rom. viii. 34. And see Heb. vii. 25.

4. He pleads the ill usage they were likely to meet with in the world, for his sake (*v.* 14): "*I have given them thy word* to be published to the world, *and they have received it*, have believed it themselves, and accepted the trust of transmitting it to the world; and therefore *the world hath hated them*, as also because they are *not of the world*, any more than I." Here we have,

(1.) The world's enmity to Christ's followers. While Christ was with them, though as yet they had given but little opposition to the world, yet it hates them, much more would it do so when by their more extensive preaching of the gospel they would *turn the world upside down*. "Father, stand their friend," says Christ, "for they are likely to have many enemies; let them have thy love, for the world's hatred is entailed upon them. In the midst of those fiery darts, let them be *compassed with thy favour as with a shield*." It is God's honour to take part with the weaker side, and to help the helpless. *Lord, be merciful to them, for men would swallow* them up.

(2.) The reasons of this enmity, which strengthen the plea. [1.] It is implied that one reason is because they had received the word of God as it was sent them by the hand of Christ, when the greatest part of the world rejected it, and set themselves against those who were the preachers and professors of it. Note, Those that receive Christ's good will and good word must expect the world's ill will and ill word. Gospel ministers have been in a particular manner hated by the world, because they call men out of the world, and separate them from it, and teach them not to conform to it, and so condemn the world. "*Father, keep them*, for it is for thy sake that they are exposed; they are sufferers for thee." Thus the psalmist pleads, *For thy sake I have borne reproach*, Ps. lxix. 7. Note, Those that keep the word of Christ's patience are entitled to special protection in the hour of temptation, Rev. iii. 10. That cause which makes a martyr may well make a joyful sufferer. [2.] Another reason is more express; the world hates them, because they *are not of the world*. Those to whom the word of Christ comes in power are not of the world, for it has this effect upon all that receive it in the love of it that it weans them from the wealth of the world, and turns them against the wickedness of the world, and therefore the world bears them a grudge.

5. He pleads their conformity to himself in a holy non-conformity to the world (*v.*16): "Father, keep them, for they are of my spirit and mind, *they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*." Those may in faith commit themselves to God's custody, (1.) Who are *as Christ was in this world*, and tread in his steps. God will love those that are like Christ. (2.) Who do not engage themselves in the world's interest, nor devote themselves to its service. Observe, [1.] That Jesus Christ was not of this world; he never had been of it, and least of all now that he was upon the point of leaving it. This intimates, *First*, His state; he was none of the world's favourites nor darlings, none of its princes nor grandees; worldly possessions he had none, not even *where to lay his head*; nor worldly power, he was no judge nor divider. *Secondly*, His Spirit; he was perfectly dead to the world, the prince of this world had nothing in him, the things of this world were nothing to him; not honour, for he *made himself of no reputation*; not riches, for *for our sakes he became poor*; not pleasures, for he *acquainted himself with grief*. See *ch.* viii. 23. [2.] That therefore true Christians are not of this world. The Spirit of Christ in them is opposite to the spirit of the world. *First*, It is their lot to be despised by the world; they are not in favour with the world any more than their Master before them was. *Secondly*, It is their privilege to be delivered from the world; as Abraham out of the land of his nativity. *Thirdly*, It is their duty and character to be dead to the world. Their most pleasing converse is, and should be, with another world, and their prevailing concern about the business of that world, not of this. Christ's disciples were weak, and had many infirmities; yet this he could say for them, They were not of the world, not of the earth, and therefore he recommends them to the care of Heaven.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

The next thing he prayed for for them was that they might be sanctified; not only kept from evil, but made good.

I. Here is the petition (*v.* 17): *Sanctify them through thy truth,* through thy word, for *thy word is truth;* it is true—it is truth itself. He desires they may be sanctified,

1. As Christians. Father, make them holy, and this will be their preservation, 1 Thess. v. 23. Observe here,

(1.) The grace desired—sanctification. The disciples were sanctified, for they were not of the world; yet he prays, *Father, sanctify them,* that is, [1.] "Confirm the work of sanctification in them, strengthen their faith, inflame their good affections, rivet their good resolutions." [2.] "Carry on that good work in them, and continue it; let the *light shine more and more.*" [3.] "Complete it, crown it with the perfection of holiness; sanctify them throughout and to the end." Note, *First,* It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his that they may be sanctified; because he cannot for shame own them as his, either here or hereafter, either employ them in his work or present them to his Father, if they be not sanctified. *Secondly,* Those that through grace are sanctified have need to be sanctified more and more. Even disciples must pray for sanctifying grace; for, if he that was the author of the good work be not the finisher of it, we are undone. Not to go forward is to go backward; *he that is holy must be holy still,* more holy still, pressing forward, soaring upward, as those that have not attained. *Thirdly,* It is God that sanctifies as well as God that justifies, 2 Cor. v. 5. *Fourthly,* It is an encouragement to us, in our prayers for sanctifying grace, that it is what Christ intercedes for for us.

(2.) The means of conferring this grace—*through thy truth, thy word is truth.* Not that the Holy One of Israel is hereby limited to means, but in the *counsel of peace* among other things it was settled and agreed, [1.] That all needful truth should be comprised and summed up in the word of God. Divine revelation, as it now stands in the written word, is not only pure truth without mixture, but entire truth without deficiency. [2.] That this word of truth should be the outward and ordinary means of our sanctification; not of itself, for then it would always sanctify, but as the instrument which the Spirit commonly uses in beginning and carrying on that good work; it is the seed of the new birth (1 Pet. i. 23), and the food of the new life, 1 Pet. ii. 1—2.

2. As ministers. "*Sanctify them,* set them apart for thyself and service; let their call to the apostleship be ratified in heaven." Prophets were said to be sanctified, Jer. i. 5. Priests and Levites were so. *Sanctify them;* that is, (1.) "Qualify them for the office, with Christian graces and ministerial gifts, to make them able ministers of the New Testament." (2.) "Separate them to the office, Rom. i. 1. I have called them, they have consented; Father, say *Amen* to it." (3.) "Own them in the office; let thy hand go along with them; sanctify them by or in thy truth, as truth is opposed to figure and shadow; sanctify them really, not ritually and ceremonially, as the Levitical priests were, by anointing and sacrifice. Sanctify them to thy truth, the word of thy truth, to be the preachers of thy truth to the world; as the priests were sanctified to serve at the altar, so let them be to preach the gospel." 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. Note, [1.] Jesus Christ intercedes for his ministers with a particular concern, and recommends to his Father's grace those stars he carries in his right hand. [2.] The great thing to be asked of God for gospel ministers is that they may be sanctified, effectually separated from the world, entirely devoted to God, and experimentally acquainted with the influence of that word upon their own hearts which they preach to others. Let them have the *Urim* and *Thummim, light* and *integrity.*

II. We have here two pleas or arguments to enforce the petition for the disciples' sanctification:—

1. The mission they had from him (*v.* 18): "*As thou hast sent me into the world,* to be thine ambassador to the children of men, so now that I am recalled *have I sent them into the world,* as my delegates." Now here,

(1.) Christ speaks with great assurance of his own mission: *Thou hast sent me into the world.* The great author of the Christian religion had his commission and instructions from him who is the origin and object of all religion. He was sent of God to say what he said, and do what he did, and be what he is to those that believe on him; which was his comfort in his undertaking, and may be ours abundantly in our dependence upon him; his record was on high, for thence his mission was.

(2.) He speaks with great satisfaction of the commission he had given his disciples "*So have I sent them* on the same errand, and to carry on the same design;" to preach the same doctrine that he preached, and to confirm it with the same proofs, with a charge likewise to commit to other faithful men that which was committed to them. He gave them their commission (*ch.* xx. 21) with a reference to his own, and it magnifies their office that it comes from Christ, and that there is some affinity between the commission given to the ministers of reconciliation and that given to the Mediator; he is called an

apostle (Heb. iii. 1), a *minister* (Rom. xv. 8), a *messenger*, Mal. iii. 1. Only they are sent as servants, he as a Son. Now this comes in here as a reason, [1.] Why Christ was concerned so much for them, and laid their case so near his heart; because he had himself put them into a difficult office, which required great abilities for the due discharge of it. Note, Whom Christ sends he will stand by, and interest himself in those that are employed for him; what he calls us out to he will fit us out for, and bear us out in. [2.] Why he committed them to his Father; because he was concerned in their cause, their mission being in prosecution of his, and as it were an assignment out of it. Christ *received gifts for men* (Ps. lxviii. 18), and then gave them to men (Eph. iv. 8), and therefore *prays aid* of his Father to warrant and uphold those gifts, and confirm his grant of them. The Father *sanctified him* when *he sent him into the world, ch.* x. 36. Now, they being sent as he was, let them also be sanctified.

2. The merit he had for them is another thing here pleaded (*v.* 19): *For their sakes I sanctify myself.* Here is, (1.) Christ's designation of himself to the work and office of Mediator: *I sanctified myself.* He entirely devoted himself to the undertaking, and all the parts of it, especially that which he was now going about—the *offering up of himself without spot unto God, by the eternal Spirit.* He, as the priest and altar, sanctified himself as the sacrifice. When he said, Father, *glorify thy name*—Father, *thy will be done*—Father, I *commit my spirit into thy hands,* he paid down the satisfaction he had engaged to make, and so sanctified himself. This he pleads with his Father, for his intercession is made in the virtue of his satisfaction; *by his own blood he entered into the holy place* (Heb. ix. 12), as the high priest, on the day of atonement, sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice at the same time that he burnt incense within the veil, Lev. xvi. 12, 14. (2.) Christ's design of kindness to his disciples herein; it is *for their sakes,* that *they may be sanctified,* that is, that they may be martyrs; so some. "I sacrifice myself, that they may be sacrificed to the glory of God and the church's good." Paul speaks of his being offered, Phil. ii. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 6. Whatever there is in the *death of the saints* that is *precious in the sight of the Lord,* it is owing to the death of the Lord Jesus. But I rather take it more generally, that they may be saints and ministers, duly qualified and accepted of God. [1.] The office of the ministry is the purchase of Christ's blood, and one of the blessed fruits of his satisfaction, and owes its virtue and value to Christ's merit. The priests under the law were consecrated with the blood of bulls and goats, but gospel ministers with the blood of Jesus. [2.] The real holiness of all good Christians is the fruit of Christ's death, by which the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased; he *gave himself for his church,* to *sanctify it,* Eph. v. 25, 26. And he that designed the end designed also the means, that they might be sanctified *by the truth,* the truth which Christ came into the world to bear witness to, and died to confirm. The word of truth receives its sanctifying virtue and power from the death of Christ. Some read it, that they may be sanctified *in truth,* that is, truly; for as God must be served, so, in order to this, we must be sanctified, *in the spirit, and in truth.* And this Christ has prayed for, for all that are his; for *this is his will, even their sanctification,* which encourages them to pray for it,

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Next to their purity he prays for their unity; for the wisdom from above is *first pure, then peaceable;* and amity is amiable indeed when it is like the ointment on Aaron's holy head, and the dew on Zion's holy hill. Observe,

I. Who are included in this prayer (*v.* 20): "*Not these only,* not these only that are now my disciples" (the eleven, the seventy, with others, men and women that followed him when he was here on earth), "but *for those also who shall believe on me through their word,* either preached by them in their own day or written by them for the generations to come; I pray *for them all,* that they all may be one in their interest in this prayer, and may all receive benefit by it." Note, here, 1. Those, and those only, are interested in the mediation of Christ, that do, or shall, believe in him. This is that by which they are described, and it comprehends all the character and duty of a Christian. They that lived then, *saw and believed,* but they in after ages *have not seen,* and yet *have believed.* 2. It is *through the word* that souls are brought to believe on Christ, and it is for this end that Christ appointed the scriptures to be written, and a standing ministry to continue in the church, while the church stands, that is, while the world stands, for the raising up of a seed. 3. It is certainly and infallibly known to Christ who shall believe on him. He does not here pray at a venture,

upon a contingency depending on the treacherous will of man, which pretends to be free, but by reason of sin is *in bondage with its children;* no, Christ knew very well whom he prayed for, the matter was reduced to a certainty by the divine prescience and purpose; he knew who were given him, who, being ordained to eternal life, were *entered in the Lamb's book,* and should undoubtedly believe, Acts xiii. 48. 4. Jesus Christ intercedes not only for great and eminent believers, but for the meanest and weakest; not for those only that are to be employed in the highest posts of trust and honour in his kingdom, but for all, even those that in the eye of the world are inconsiderable. As the divine providence extends itself to the meanest creature, so does the divine grace to the meanest Christian. The good Shepherd has an eye even to *the poor of the flock.* 5. Jesus Christ in his mediation had an actual regard to those of the chosen remnant that were yet unborn, the people that *should be created* (Ps. xxii. 31), the *other sheep* which he *must yet bring.* Before they are *formed in the womb he knows them* (Jer. i. 5), and prayers are filed in heaven for them beforehand, by him who *declareth the end from the beginning, and calleth things that are not as though they were.*

II. What is intended in this prayer (*v.* 21): *That they all may be one.* The same was said before (*v.* 11), *that they may be one as we are,* and again, *v.* 22. The heart of Christ was much upon this. Some think that the oneness prayed for in *v.* 11 has special reference to the disciples as ministers and apostles, that they might be one in their testimony to Christ; and that the harmony of the evangelists, and concurrence of the first preachers of the gospel, are owing to this prayer. Let them be not only of *one heart,* but of *one mouth,* speaking the same thing. The unity of gospel ministers is both the beauty and strength of the gospel interest. But it is certain that the oneness prayed for in *v.* 21 respects all believers. It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his, and we may be sure it is an answered prayer—*that they all may be one,* one in us (*v.* 21), one *as we are one* (*v.* 22), made *perfect in one, v.* 23. It includes three things:—

1. That they might all be *incorporated in one body.* "Father, look upon them all as one, and ratify that great charter by which they are embodied as one church. Though they live in distant places, from one end of heaven to the other, and in several ages, from the beginning to the close of time, and so cannot have any personal acquaintance or correspondence with each other, yet let them be united in me their common head." As Christ died, so he prayed, to *gather them all in one, ch.* xi. 52; Eph. i. 10.

2. That they might all be animated by one Spirit. This is plainly implied in this—*that they may be one in us.* Union with the Father and Son is obtained and kept up only by the Holy Ghost. *He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit,* 1 Cor. vi. 17. Let them all be stamped with the same image and superscription, and influenced by the same power.

3. That they might all be *knit together* in the bond of love and charity, all of one heart. *That they all may be one,* (1.) In judgment and sentiment; not in every little thing—this is neither possible nor needful, but in the great things of God, and in them, by the virtue of this prayer, they are all agreed—that God's favour is better than life—that sin is the worst of evils, Christ the best of friends—that there is another life after this, and the like. (2.) In disposition and inclination. All that are sanctified have the same divine nature and image; they have all a new heart, and it is *one heart.* (3.) They are all one in their designs and aims. Every true Christian, *as far as he is so,* eyes the glory of God as his highest end, and the glory of heaven as his chief good. (4.) They are all one in their desires and prayers; though they differ in words and the manner of expressions, yet, having all received the same *spirit of adoption,* and observing the same rule, they pray for the same things in effect. (5.) All one in love and affection. Every true Christian has that in him which inclines him to love all true Christians as such. That which Christ here prays for is that *communion of saints* which we profess to believe; the fellowship which all believers have with God, and their intimate union with all the saints in heaven and earth, 1 John i. 3. But this prayer of Christ will not have its complete answer till all the saints come to heaven, for then, and not till then, they shall be *perfect in one, v.* 23; Eph. iv. 13.

III. What is intimated by way of plea or argument to enforce this petition; three things:—

1. The oneness that is between the Father and the Son, which is mentioned again and again, *v.* 11, 21—23. (1.) It is taken for granted that the Father and Son are one, one in nature and essence, equal in power and glory, one in mutual endearments. The *Father loveth the Son,* and the Son always pleased the Father. They are one in design, and one in operation. The intimacy of this oneness is expressed in these words, *thou in me, and I in thee.* This he often mentions for his support under his present sufferings, when his enemies were ready to fall upon him, and his friends to fall off from him; yet he was in the Father, and the Father in him. (2.) This is insisted on in Christ's prayer for his disciples' oneness, [1.] As the pattern of that oneness, showing how he desired they might be one. Believers are one in some measure as God and Christ are one; for, *First,* The union of believers is a strict and close union; they are united by a divine nature, by the power of divine grace, in pursuance of the divine counsels. *Secondly,* It

is a holy union, in the Holy Spirit, for holy ends; not a body politic for any secular purpose. *Thirdly*, It is, and will be at last, a complete union. Father and Son have the same attributes, properties, and perfections; so have believers now, as far as they are sanctified, and when grace shall be perfected in glory they will be exactly consonant to each other, all changed into the same image. [2.] As the centre of that oneness; that they may be *one in us*, all meeting here. There is *one God* and *one Mediator;* and herein believers are one, that they all agree to depend upon the favour of this one God as their felicity and the merit of this one Mediator as their righteousness. That is a conspiracy, not a union, which doth not centre in God as the end, and Christ as the way. All who are truly united to God and Christ, who *are one*, will soon be *united one to another*. [3.] As a plea for that oneness. The Creator and Redeemer are one in interest and design; but to what purpose are they so, if all believers be not one body with Christ, and do not jointly receive grace for grace from him, as he has received it for them? Christ's design was to reduce revolted mankind to God: "Father," says he, "let all that believe be one, that *in one body* they may be reconciled" (Eph. ii. 15, 16), which speaks of the uniting of Jews and Gentiles in the church; that great mystery, that the Gentiles should be *fellow-heirs, and of the same body* (Eph. iii. 6), to which I think this prayer of Christ principally refers, it being one great thing he aimed at in his dying; and I wonder none of the expositors I have met with should so apply it. "Father, let the Gentiles that believe be incorporated with the believing Jews, and *make of twain one new man.*" Those words, *I in them, and thou in me*, show what that union is which is so necessary, not only to the beauty, but to the very being, of his church. *First*, Union with Christ: *I in them.* Christ dwelling in the hearts of believers is the life and soul of the new man. *Secondly*, Union with God through him: *Thou in me*, so as by me to be in them. *Thirdly*, Union with each other, resulting from these: *that they* hereby *may be made perfect in one.* We are complete in him.

2. The design of Christ in all his communications of light and grace to them (*v.* 22): "*The glory which thou gavest me*, as the trustee or channel of conveyance, *I have* accordingly *given them*, to this intent, *that they may be one, as we are one;* so that those gifts will be in vain, if they be not one." Now these gifts are either, (1.) Those that were conferred upon the apostles, and first planters of the church. The glory of being God's ambassadors to the world—the glory of working miracles—the glory of gathering a church out of the world, and erecting the throne of God's kingdom among men—this glory was given to Christ, and some of the honour he put upon them when he sent them to *disciple all nations.* Or, (2.) Those that are given in common to all believers. The glory of being in covenant with the Father, and accepted of him, of being laid in his bosom, and designed for a place at his right hand, was the glory which the Father gave to the Redeemer, and he has confirmed it to the redeemed. [1.] This honour he says he *hath given them*, because he hath intended it for them, settled it upon them, and secured it to them upon their believing Christ's promises to be real gifts. [2.] This was given to him to give to them; it was conveyed to him in trust for them, and he was faithful to him that appointed him. [3.] He gave it to them, that they *might be one. First*, To entitle them to the privilege of unity, that by virtue of their common relation to *one God the Father*, and *one Lord Jesus Christ*, they might be truly denominated one. The gift of the Spirit, that great glory which the Father gave to the Son, by him to be given to all believers, makes them one, for he works *all in all*, 1 Cor. xii. 4, &c. *Secondly*, To engage them to the duty of unity. That in consideration of their agreement and communion in one creed and one covenant, one Spirit and one Bible—in consideration of what they have in one God and one Christ, and of what they hope for in one heaven, they may be of one mind and one mouth. Worldly glory sets men at variance; for if some be advanced others are eclipsed, and therefore, while the disciples dreamed of a temporal kingdom, they were ever and anon quarrelling; but spiritual honours being conferred alike upon all Christ's subjects, they being all *made to our God kings and priests*, there is no occasion for contest nor emulation. The more Christians are taken up with the glory Christ has given them, the less desirous they will be of vain-glory, and, consequently, the less disposed to quarrel.

3. He pleads the happy influence their oneness would have upon others, and the furtherance it would give to the public good. This is twice urged (*v.* 21): *That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* And again (*v.* 23): *That the world may know it*, for without knowledge there can be no true faith. Believers must know what they believe, and why and wherefore they believe it. Those who believe *at a venture*, venture too far. Now Christ here shows,

(1.) His good-will to the world of mankind in general. Herein he is of his Father's mind, as we are sure he is in every thing, that he would have all men to be saved, and to *come to the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9. Therefore it is his will that all means possible should be used, and no stone left unturned, for the conviction and conversion of the world. We know not who are chosen, but we must in our places do our utmost to further men's salvation, and take heed of doing any thing to hinder it.

(2.) The good fruit of the church's one-

ness; it will be an evidence of the truth of Christianity, and a means of bringing many to embrace it.

[1.] In general, it will recommend Christianity to the world, and to the good opinion of those that are without. *First*, The embodying of Christians in one society by the gospel charter will greatly promote Christianity. When the world shall see so many of those that were its children called out of its family, distinguished from others, and changed from what they themselves sometimes were,—when they shall see this society raised by the foolishness of preaching, and kept up by miracles of divine providence and grace, and how admirably well it is modelled and constituted, they will be ready to say, *We will go with you, for we see that God is with you. Secondly*, The uniting of Christians in love and charity is the beauty of their profession, and invites others to join with them, as the love that was among those primo-primitive Christians, Acts ii. 42, 43; iv. 32, 33. When Christianity, instead of causing quarrels about itself, makes all other strifes to cease,—when it cools the fiery, smooths the rugged, and disposes men to be kind and loving, courteous and beneficent, to all men, studious to preserve and promote peace in all relations and societies, this will recommend it to all that have any thing either of natural religion or natural affection in them.

[2.] In particular, it will beget in men good thoughts, *First*, Of Christ: They will know and believe that *thou hast sent me.* By this it will appear that Christ was sent of God, and that his doctrine was divine, in that his religion prevails to join so many of different capacities, tempers, and interests in other things, in one body by faith, with one heart by love. Certainly he was sent by the God of power, who fashions men's hearts alike, and the God of love and peace; when the worshippers of God are one, he is one, and his name one. *Secondly*, Of Christians: They will *know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.* Here is, 1. The privilege of believers: *the Father* himself loveth them with a love resembling his love to his Son, for they are loved in him with an everlasting love. 2. The evidence of their interest in this privilege, and that is their being one. By this it will appear that God loves us, if we *love one another with a pure heart;* for wherever *the love of God is shed abroad in the heart* it will change it into the same image. See how much good it would do to the world to know better how dear to God all good Christians are. The Jews had a saying, *If the world did but know the worth of good men, they would hedge them about with pearls.* Those that have so much of God's love should have more of ours.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. 26 And I have declared unto them thy name; and will declare *it:* that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Here is, I. A petition for the glorifying of all those that were given to Christ (*v.* 24), not only these apostles, but all believers: *Father, I will that they may be with me.* Observe,

1. The connection of this request with those foregoing. He had prayed that God would preserve, sanctify, and unite them; and now he prays that he would crown all his gifts with their glorification. In this method we must pray, first for grace, and then for glory (Ps. lxxxiv. 11); for in this method God gives. Far be it from the only wise God to come under the imputation either of that *foolish builder who without a foundation built upon the sand*, as he would if he should glorify any whom he has not first sanctified; or of that *foolish builder who began to build and was not able to finish*, as he would if he should sanctify any, and not glorify them.

2. The manner of the request: *Father, I will.* Here, as before, he addresses himself to God as a Father, and therein we must do likewise; but when he says, θέλω—*I will*, he speaks a language peculiar to himself, and such as does not become ordinary petitioners, but very well became him who paid for what he prayed for. (1.) This intimates the authority of his intercession in general; his word was with power in heaven, as well as on earth. He entering *with his own blood into the holy place*, his intercession there has an uncontrollable efficacy. He intercedes as a king, for he is a priest upon his throne (like Melchizedek), a king-priest. (2.) It intimates his particular authority in this matter; he had a power to *give eternal life* (*v.* 2), and, pursuant to that power, he says, *Father, I will.* Though now he *took upon him the form of a servant*, yet that power being to be most illustriously exerted when he shall come the second time in the glory of a judge, to say, *Come ye blessed*, having that in his eye, he might well say, *Father, I will.*

3. The request itself—that all the elect might come to be with him in heaven at last, to see his glory, and to share in it. Now observe here,

(1.) Under what notion we are to hope for heaven? wherein does that happiness consist? three things make heaven:—[1.] It is to be where Christ is: *Where I am;* in the

paradise whither Christ's soul went at death; in the third heavens whither his soul and body went at his ascension:—*Where I am*, am to be shortly, am to be eternally. In this world we are but *in transitu—on our passage;* there we truly are where we are to be for ever; so Christ reckoned, and so must we. [2.] It is to be with him where he is; this is no tautology, but intimates that we shall not only be in the same happy place where Christ is, but that the happiness of the place will consist in his presence; this is *the fulness of its joy*. The very heaven of heaven is to be with Christ, there in company with him, and communion with him, Phil. i. 23. [3.] It is to *behold his glory, which the Father* has given him. Observe, *First*, The glory of the Redeemer is the brightness of heaven. That glory before which angels cover their faces was his glory, *ch.* xii. 41. The Lamb is the light of the new Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 23. Christ will *come in the glory of his Father*, for *he is the brightness of his glory*. God shows his glory there, as he does his grace here, through Christ. "*The Father has given me this glory*," though he was as yet in his low estate; but it was very sure, and very near. *Secondly*, The felicity of the redeemed consists very much in the beholding of this glory; they will have the immediate view of his glorious person. *I shall see God in my flesh*, Job xix. 26, 27. They will have a clear insight into his glorious undertaking, as it will be then accomplished; they will see into those springs of love from which flow all the streams of grace; they shall have an appropriating sight of Christ's glory (*Uxor fulget radiis mariti—The wife shines with the radiance of her husband)*, and an assimilating sight: they shall *be changed into the same image, from glory to glory*.

(2.) Upon what ground we are to hope for heaven; no other than purely the mediation and intercession of Christ, because he hath said, *Father, I will*. Our sanctification is our evidence, for *he that has this hope in him purifies himself;* but it is the will of Christ that is our title, *by which will we are sanctified*, Heb. x. 10. Christ speaks here as if he did not count his own happiness complete unless he had his elect to share with him in it, for it is *the bringing of many sons to glory that makes the captain of our salvation perfect*, Heb. ii. 10.

4. The argument to back this request: *for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world*. This is a reason, (1.) Why he expected this glory himself. Thou wilt *give it to me, for thou lovedst me*. The honour and power given to the Son as Mediator were founded in the Father's love to him (*ch.* v. 20): *the Father loves the Son*, is infinitely well pleased in his undertaking, and *therefore has given all things into his hands;* and, the matter being concerted in the divine counsels from eternity, he is said to love him as Mediator *before the foundation of the world*. Or, (2.) Why he expected that those who *were given to him* should be with him to share in his glory: "*Thou lovedst me*, and them in me, and canst deny me nothing I ask for them."

II. The conclusion of the prayer, which is designed to enforce all the petitions for the disciples, especially the last, that they may be glorified. Two things he insists upon, and pleads:—

1. The respect he had to his Father, *v.* 25. Observe,

(1.) The title he gives to God: *O righteous Father*. When he prayed that they might be sanctified, he called him *holy Father;* when he prays that they may be glorified, he calls him *righteous Father;* for it is a *crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give*. God's righteousness was engaged for the giving out of all that good which the Father had promised and the Son had purchased.

(2.) The character he gives of the world that lay in wickedness: *The world has not known thee*. Note, Ignorance of God overspreads the world of mankind; this is the darkness they sit in. Now this is urged here, [1.] To show that these disciples needed the aids of special grace, both because of the necessity of their work—they were to bring a world that knew not God to the knowledge of him; and also because of the difficulty of their work—they must bring light to those that rebelled against the light; therefore keep them. [2.] To show that they were qualified for further peculiar favours, for they had that knowledge of God which the world had not.

(3,) The plea he insists upon for himself: *But I have known thee*. Christ knew the Father as no one else ever did; knew upon what grounds he went in his undertaking, knew his Father's mind in every thing, and therefore, in this prayer, came to him with confidence, as we do to one we know. Christ is here suing out blessings for those that were his; pursuing this petition, when he had said, *The world has not known thee*, one would expect it should follow, *but they have known thee;* no, their knowledge was not to be boasted of, *but I have known thee*, which intimates that there is nothing in us to recommend us to God's favour, but all our interest in him, and intercourse with him, result from, and depend upon, Christ's interest and intercourse. We are unworthy, but he is worthy.

(4.) The plea he insists upon for his disciples: *And they have known that thou hast sent me;* and, [1.] Hereby they are distinguished from the unbelieving world. When multitudes to whom Christ was sent, and his grace offered, would not *believe that God had sent him*, these knew it, and believed it, and were not ashamed to own it. Note, To know and believe in Jesus Christ, in the midst of a world that persists in igno-

rance and infidelity, is highly pleasing to God, and shall certainly be crowned with distinguishing glory. Singular faith qualifies for singular favours. [2.] Hereby they are interested in the mediation of Christ, and partake of the benefit of his acquaintance with the Father: "*I have known thee,* immediately and perfectly; and these, though they have not so known thee, nor were capable of knowing thee so, yet *have known that thou hast sent me,* have known that which was required of them to know, have known the Creator in the Redeemer." Knowing Christ as sent of God, they have, in him, known the Father, and are introduced to an acquaintance with him; therefore, "Father, look after them for my sake."

2. The respect he had to his disciples (*v.* 26): "I have led them into the knowledge of thee, and will do it yet more and more; with this great and kind intention, *that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*" Observe here,

(1.) What Christ had done for them: *I have declared unto them thy name.* [1.] This he had done for those that were his immediate followers. *All the time that he went in and out among them,* he made it his business to declare his Father's name to them, and to beget in them a veneration for it. The tendency of all his sermons and miracles was to advance his Father's honour, and to spread the knowledge of him, *ch.* i. 18. [2.] This he has done for all that believe on him; for they had not been brought to believe if Christ had not made known to them his Father's name. Note, *First,* We are indebted to Christ for all the knowledge we have of the Father's name; he declares it, and he opens the understanding to receive that revelation. *Secondly,* Those whom Christ recommends to the favour of God he first leads into an acquaintance with God.

(2.) What he intended to do yet further for them: *I will declare it.* To the disciples he designed to give further instructions after his resurrection (Acts i. 3), and to bring them into a much more intimate acquaintance with divine things by the pouring out of the Spirit after his ascension; and to all believers, into whose hearts he hath shined, he shines more and more. Where Christ has *declared his Father's name, he will declare it;* for *to him that hath shall be given;* and those that know God both need and desire to know more of him. This is fitly pleaded for them: "Father, own and favour them, for they will own and honour thee."

(3.) What he aimed at in all this; not to fill their heads with curious speculations, and furnish them with something to talk of among the learned, but to secure and advance their real happiness in two things:—

[1.] Communion with God: "Therefore I have given them the knowledge of thy name, of all that whereby thou hast made thyself known, *that thy love,* even that *wherewith thou hast loved me, may be,* not only towards them, but *in them;*" that is, *First,* "Let them have the fruits of that love for their sanctification; let *the Spirit of love,* with which thou hast filled me, *be in them.*" Christ declares his Father's name to believers, that with that divine light darted into their minds a divine love may be shed abroad in their hearts, to be in them a commanding constraining principle of holiness, that they may partake of a divine nature. When God's love to us comes to be in us, it is like the virtue which the loadstone gives the needle, inclining it to move towards the pole; it draws out the soul towards God in pious and devout affections, which are as the spirits of the divine life in the soul. *Secondly,* "Let them have the taste and relish of that love for their consolation; let them not only be interested in the love of God, by having God's name declared to them, but, by a further declaration of it, let them have the comfort of that interest; that they may not only know God, but *know that they know him,*" 1 John ii. 3. It is *the love of God* thus *shed abroad in the heart* that fills it with joy, Rom. v. 3, 5. This God has provided for, that we may not only be satisfied with his loving kindness, but be satisfied of it; and so may live a life of complacency in God and communion with him; this we must pray for, this we must press after; if we have it, we must thank Christ for it; if we want it, we may thank ourselves.

[2.] Union with Christ in order hereunto: *And I in them.* There is no getting into the love of God but through Christ, nor can we keep ourselves in that love but by abiding in Christ, that is, having him to abide in us; nor can we have the sense and apprehension of that love but by our experience of the indwelling of Christ, that is, the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. It is *Christ in us* that is *the* only *hope of glory* that will *not make us ashamed,* Col. i. 27. All our communion with God, the reception of his love to us with our return of love to him again, passes through the hands of the Lord Jesus, and the comfort of it is owing purely to him. Christ had said but a little before, *I in them* (*v.* 23), and here it is repeated (though the sense was complete without it), and the prayer closed with it, to show how much the heart of Christ was set upon it; all his petitions centre in this, and with this *the prayers of Jesus, the Son of David, are ended: "I in them;* let me have this, and I desire no more." It is the glory of the Redeemer to dwell in the redeemed: it is his *rest for ever,* and he has desired it. Let us therefore make sure our union with Christ, and then take the comfort of his intercession. *This* prayer had an end, but *that* he ever lives to make.

CHAP. XVIII.

Hitherto this evangelist has recorded little of the history of Christ, only so far as was requisite to introduce his discourses; but now that the time drew nigh that Jesus must die he is very particular in relating the circumstances of his sufferings, and some

which the others had omitted, especially his sayings. So far were his followers from being ashamed of his cross, or endeavouring to conceal it, that this was what, both by word and writing, they were most industrious to proclaim, and gloried in it. This chapter relates, I. How Christ was arrested in the garden and surrendered himself a prisoner, ver. 1—12. II. How he was abused in the high priest's court, and how Peter, in the mean time, denied him, ver. 13—27. III. How he was prosecuted before Pilate, and examined by him, and put in election with Barabbas for the favour of the people, and lost it, ver. 28—40.

WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. 2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples. 3 Judas then, having received a band *of men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward and fell to the ground. 7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. 10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. 11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? 12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him.

The hour was now come that *the captain of our salvation*, who was to be *made perfect by sufferings*, should engage the enemy. We have here his entrance upon the encounter. The day of recompence is in his heart, and *the year of his redeemed is come, and his own arm works the salvation*, for he has no second. *Let us turn aside now, and see this great sight.*

I. Our Lord Jesus, like a bold champion, takes the field first (*v.* 1, 2): *When he had spoken these words*, preached the sermon, prayed his prayer, and so finished his testimony, he would lose no time, but *went forth* immediately out of the house, out of the city, by moon-light, for the passover was observed at the full moon, *with his disciples* (the eleven, for Judas was otherwise employed), and *he went over the brook Cedron*, which runs between Jerusalem and the mount of Olives, *where was a garden*, not his own, but some friend's, who allowed him the liberty of it. Observe,

1. That our Lord Jesus entered upon his sufferings *when he had spoken these words*, as Matt. xxvi. 1, *When he had finished all these sayings*. Here it is intimated, (1.) That our Lord Jesus took his work before him. The office of the priest was to teach, and pray, and offer sacrifice. Christ, after teaching and praying, applies himself to make atonement. Christ had said all he had to say as a prophet, and now he addresses himself to the discharge of his office as a priest, to *make his soul an offering for sin;* and, when he had gone through this, he entered upon his kingly office. (2.) That having by his sermon prepared his disciples for this hour of trial, and by his prayer prepared himself for it, he then courageously went out to meet it. When he had put on his armour, he entered the lists, and not till then. Let those that suffer according to the will of God, in a good cause, with a good conscience, and having a clear call to it, comfort themselves with this, that Christ will not engage those that are his in any conflict, but he will first do that for them which is necessary to prepare them for it; and if we receive Christ's instructions and comforts, and be interested in his intercession, we may, with an unshaken resolution, venture through the greatest hardships in the way of duty.

2. That *he went forth with his disciples.* Judas knew what house he was in in the city, and he could have staid and met his sufferings there; but, (1.) He would do as he was wont to do, and not alter his method, either to meet the cross or to miss it, when his hour was come. It was his custom when he was at Jerusalem, after he had spent the day in public work, to retire at night *to the mount of Olives;* there his quarters were, in the skirts of the city, for they would not make room for him in the palaces, in the heart of the town. This being his custom, he would not be put out of his method by the foresight of his sufferings, but, as Daniel, did then just *as he did aforetime*, Dan. vi. 10. (2.) He was as unwilling that there should be *an uproar among the people* as his enemies were, for it was not his way *to strive or cry.* If he had been seized in the city, and a tumult raised thereby, mischief might have been done, and a great deal of blood shed, and therefore he withdrew. Note, When we find ourselves involved in trouble, we should be afraid of involving others with us. It is

no disgrace to the followers of Christ to fall tamely. Those who aim at honour from men value themselves upon a resolution to sell their lives as dearly as they can; but those who know that their blood is precious to Christ, and that not a drop of it shall be shed but upon a valuable consideration, need not stand upon such terms. (3.) He would set us an example in the beginning of his passion, as he did at the end of it, of retirement from the world. *Let us go forth to him, without the camp, bearing his reproach,* Heb. xiii. 13. We must lay aside, and leave behind, the crowds, and cares, and comforts, of cities, even holy cities, if we would cheerfully take up our cross, and keep up our communion with God therein.

3. That he went *over the brook Cedron.* He must go over this to go to *the mount of Olives,* but the notice taken of it intimates that there was something in it significant; and it points, (1.) At David's prophecy concerning the Messiah (Ps. cx. 7), that *he shall drink of the brook in the way;* the brook of suffering in the way to his glory and our salvation, signified by *the brook Cedron, the black brook,* so called either from the darkness of the valley it ran through or the colour of the water, tainted with the dirt of the city; such a brook Christ drank of, when it lay in the way of our redemption, and *therefore shall he lift up the head,* his own and ours. (2.) At David's pattern, as a type of the Messiah. In his flight from Absalom, particular notice is taken of his *passing over the brook Cedron, and going up by the ascent of mount Olivet, weeping,* and all that were with him in tears too, 2 Sam. xv. 23, 30. *The Son of David,* being driven out by the rebellious Jews, who would *not have him to reign over them* (and Judas, like Ahithophel, being in the plot against him), passed over the brook in meanness and humiliation, attended by a company of true mourners. The godly kings of Judah had burnt and destroyed the idols they found at *the brook Cedron:* Asa, 2 Chron. xv. 16; Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxx. 14; Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 4, 6. Into that brook the abominable things were cast. Christ, *being now made sin for us,* that he might abolish it and take it away, began his passion by the same brook. Mount Olivet, where Christ began his sufferings, lay on the east side of Jerusalem; mount Calvary, where he finished them, on the west; for in them he had an eye to such as should *come from the east and the west.*

4. That he entered into a garden. This circumstance is taken notice of only by this evangelist, that Christ's sufferings began in a garden. In the garden of Eden sin began; there the curse was pronounced, there the Redeemer was promised, and therefore in a garden that promised seed entered the lists with the old serpent. Christ was buried also in a garden. (1.) Let us, when we walk in our gardens, take occasion thence to meditate on Christ's sufferings in a garden, to which we owe all the pleasure we have in our gardens, for by them the curse upon the ground for man's sake was removed. (2.) When we are in the midst of our possessions and enjoyments, we must keep up an expectation of troubles, for our gardens of delight are in a vale of tears.

5. That he had his disciples with him, (1.) Because he used to take them with him when he retired for prayer. (2.) They must be witnesses of his sufferings, and his patience under them, that they might with the more assurance and affection preach them to the world (Luke xxiv. 48), and be themselves prepared to suffer. (3.) He would take them into the danger to show them their weakness, notwithstanding the promises they had made of fidelity. Christ sometimes brings his people into difficulties, that he may magnify himself in their deliverance.

6. That Judas the traitor *knew the place,* knew it to be the place of his usual retirement, and probably, by some word Christ had dropped, knew that he intended to be there that night, for want of a better closet. A solitary garden is a proper place for meditation and prayer, and after a passover is a proper time to retire for private devotion, that we may pray over the impressions made and the vows renewed, and clench the nail. Mention is made of Judas's knowing the place, (1.) To aggravate the sin of Judas, that he would betray his Master, notwithstanding the intimate acquaintance he had with him; nay, and that he would make use of his familiarity with Christ, as giving him an opportunity of betraying him; a generous mind would have scorned to do so base a thing. Thus has Christ's holy religion been *wounded in the house of its friends,* as it could not have been wounded any where else. Many an apostate could not have been so profane, if he had not been a professor; could not have ridiculed scriptures and ordinances, if he had not known them. (2.) To magnify the love of Christ, that, though he knew where the traitor would seek him, thither he went to be found of him, now that he knew his *hour was come.* Thus he showed himself willing to suffer and die for us. What he did was not by constraint, but by consent; though as man he said, *Let this cup pass away,* as Mediator he said, "*Lo, I come.* I come with a good will." It was late in the night (we may suppose eight or nine o'clock) when Christ went out to the garden; for it was not only his *meat and drink,* but his rest and sleep, *to do the will of him that sent him.* When others were going to bed, he was going to prayer, going to suffer.

II. *The captain of our salvation* having taken the field, the enemy presently comes upon the spot, and attacks him (*v.* 3): Judas with his men comes thither, commissioned by the chief priests, especially those among them that were Pharisees, who were the

most bitter enemies to Christ. This evangelist passes over Christ's agony, because the other three had fully related it, and presently introduces Judas and his company that came to seize him. Observe,

1. The persons employed in this action—*a band of men and officers from the chief priests, with Judas.* (1.) Here is a multitude engaged against Christ—*a band of men,* σπεῖρα—*cohors, a regiment,* a Roman band, which some think was five hundred men, others a thousand. Christ's friends were few, his enemies many. Let us therefore *not follow a multitude to do evil,* nor fear a multitude designing evil to us, *if God be for us.* (2.) Here is a mixed multitude; the band of men were Gentiles, Roman soldiers, a detachment out of the guards that were posted in the tower of Antonia, to be a curb upon the city; the *officers of the chief priests,* ὑπηρέτας. Either their domestic servants, or the officers of their courts, were Jews; these had an enmity to each other, but were united against Christ, who came to *reconcile both to God in one body.* (3.) It is a commissioned multitude, not a popular tumult; no, they have received orders *from the chief priests,* upon whose suggestion to the governor that this Jesus was a dangerous man, it is likely, they had a warrant from him too to take him up, *for they feared the people.* See what enemies Christ and his gospel have had, and are likely to have, numerous and potent, and therefore formidable: ecclesiastical and civil powers combined against them, Ps. ii. 1, 2. Christ said it would be so (Matt. x. 18), and found it so. (4.) All under the direction of Judas. He *received* this *band of men;* it is probable that he requested it, alleging that it was necessary to send a good force, being as ambitious of the honour of commanding in chief in this expedition as he was covetous of *the wages of* this *unrighteousness.* He thought himself wonderfully preferred from coming in the rear of the contemptible twelve to be placed at the head of these formidable hundreds; he never made such a figure before, and promised himself, perhaps, that this should not be the last time, but he should be rewarded with a captain's commission, or better, if he succeeded well in this enterprise.

2. The preparation they had made for an attack: They came *with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.* (1.) If Christ should abscond, though they had moonlight, they would have occasion for their lights; but they might have spared these; the second Adam was not driven, as the first was, to hide himself, either for fear or shame, *among the trees of the garden.* It was folly to light a candle to seek the Sun by. (2.) If he should resist, they would have occasion for their arms. *The weapons of his warfare were spiritual,* and at these *weapons* he had often beaten them, and *put them to silence,* and therefore they have now recourse to other *weapons, swords and staves.*

III. Our Lord Jesus gloriously repulsed the first onset of the enemy, *v.* 4—6, where observe,

1. How he received them, with all the mildness imaginable towards them, and all the calmness imaginable in himself.

(1.) He met them with a very soft and mild question (*v.* 4): *Knowing all things that should come upon him,* and therefore not at all surprised with this alarm, with a wonderful intrepidity and presence of mind, undisturbed and undaunted, he *went forth* to meet them, and, as if he had been unconcerned, softly asked, "*Whom seek you?* What is the matter? What means this bustle at this time of night?" See here, [1.] Christ's foresight of his sufferings: he *knew all those things that should come upon him,* for he had bound himself to suffer them. Unless we had strength, as Christ had, to bear the discovery, we should not covet to know what shall come upon us; it would but anticipate our pain; *sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof:* yet it will do us good to expect sufferings in general, so that when they come we may say, "It is but what we looked for, the cost we sat down and counted upon." [2.] Christ's forwardness to his sufferings; he did not run away from them, but went out to meet them, and reached forth his hand to take the bitter cup. When the people would have forced him to a crown, and offered to make him a king in Galilee, he withdrew, and hid himself (*ch.* vi. 15); but, when they came to force him to a cross, he offered himself; for he came to this world to suffer and went to the other world to reign. This will not warrant us needlessly to expose ourselves to trouble, for we know not when our hour is come; but we are called to suffering when we have no way to avoid it but by sin; and, when it comes to this, let *none of these things move* us, for they cannot hurt us.

(2.) He met them with a very calm and mild answer when they told him whom they were in quest of, *v.* 5. They said, *Jesus of Nazareth;* and he said, *I am he.* [1.] It should seem, *their eyes were held, that they could not know him.* It is highly probable that many of the Roman band, at least the officers of the temple, had often seen him, if only to satisfy their curiosity; Judas, however, to be sure, knew him well enough, and yet none of them could pretend to say, *Thou art the man* we seek. Thus he showed them the folly of bringing lights to see for him, for he could make them not to know him when they saw him; and he has herein shown us how easily he can infatuate the counsels of his enemies, and make them lose themselves, when they are seeking mischief. [2.] In their enquiries for him they called him *Jesus of Nazareth,* which was the only title they knew him by, and probably he was so called in their warrant. It was a name of reproach given him, to darken the evidence of his being the Messiah. By this it appears that they knew him not, whence he was;

for, if they had known him, surely they would not have persecuted him. [3.] He fairly answers them: *I am he.* He did not improve the advantage he had against them by their blindness, as Elisha did against the Syrians, telling them, *This is not the way, neither is this the city;* but improves it as an opportunity of showing his willingness to suffer. Though they called him Jesus of Nazareth, he answered to the name, for he despised the reproach; he might have said, *I am not he,* for he was *Jesus of Bethlehem;* but he would by no means allow equivocations. He has hereby taught us to own him, whatever it cost us; not to be *ashamed of him or his words;* but even in difficult times *to confess Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner. I am he,* Ἐγώ εἰμι—*I am he,* is the glorious name of the blessed God (Exod. iii. 14), and the honour of that name is justly challenged by the blessed Jesus. [4.] Particular notice is taken, in a parenthesis, *that Judas stood with them.* He that used to stand with those that followed Christ now stood with those that fought against him. This describes an apostate; he is one that changes sides. He herds himself with those with whom his heart always was, and with whom he shall have his lot in the judgment-day. This is mentioned, *First,* To show the impudence of Judas. One would wonder where he got the confidence with which he now faced his Master, and *was not ashamed, neither could he blush;* Satan in his heart gave him a whore's forehead. *Secondly,* To show that Judas was particularly aimed at in the power which went along with that word, *I am he,* to foil the aggressors. It was an arrow levelled at the traitor's conscience, and pierced him to the quick; for Christ's coming and his voice will be more terrible to apostates and betrayers than to sinners of any other class.

2. See how he terrified them, and obliged them to retire (*v.* 6): *They went backward, and,* like men thunder-struck, *fell to the ground.* It should seem, they did not fall forward, as humbling themselves before him, and yielding to him, but backward, as standing it out to the utmost. Thus Christ was declared to be more than a man, even when he was trampled upon as *a worm, and no man.* This word, *I am he,* had revived his disciples, and raised them up (Matt. xiv. 27); but the same word strikes his enemies down. Hereby he showed plainly,

(1.) What he could have done with them. When he struck them down, he could have struck them dead; when he spoke them *to the ground,* he could have spoken them to hell, and have sent them, like Korah's company, the next way thither; but he would not do so, [1.] Because the hour of his suffering was come, and he would not put it by; he would only show that his life was not forced from him, but *he laid it down of himself,* as he had said. [2.] Because he would give an instance of his patience and forbearance with the worst of men, and his compassionate love to his very enemies. In striking them down, and no more, he gave them both a call to repent and space to repent; but *their hearts were hardened,* and all was in vain.

(2.) What he will do at last with all his implacable enemies, *that will not repent to give him glory; they shall flee, they shall fall, before him.* Now the scripture was accomplished (Ps. xxi. 12), *Thou shalt make them turn their back,* and Ps. xx. 8. And it will be accomplished more and more; *with the breath of his mouth he will slay the wicked,* 2 Thes. ii. 8; Rev. xix. 21. *Quid judicaturus faciet, qui judicandus hoc facit?—What will he do when he shall come to judge, seeing he did this when he came to be judged?*—Augustine.

IV. Having given his enemies a repulse, he gives his friends a protection, and that by his word too, *v.* 7—9, where we may observe,

1. How he continued to expose himself to their rage, *v.* 7. They did not lie long where they fell, but, by divine permission, got up again; it is only in the other world that God's judgments are everlasting. When they were down, one would have thought Christ should have made his escape; when they were up again, one would have thought they should have let fall their pursuit; but still we find, (1.) They are as eager as ever to seize him. It is in some confusion and disorder that they recover themselves; they cannot imagine what ailed them, that they could not keep their ground, but will impute it to any thing rather than Christ's power. Note, There are hearts so very hard in sin that nothing will work upon them to reduce and reclaim them. (2.) He is as willing as ever to be seized. When they were fallen before him, he did not insultover them, but, seeing them at a loss, asked them the same question, *Whom seek you?* And they gave him the same answer, *Jesus of Nazareth.* In his repeating the question, he seems to come yet closer to their consciences: "Do you not know *whom you seek?* Are you not aware that you are in error, and will you meddle with your match? Have you not had enough of it, but will you try the other struggle? *Did ever any harden his heart against God and prosper?*" In their repeating the same answer, they showed an obstinacy in their wicked way; they still call him *Jesus of Nazareth,* with as much disdain as ever, and Judas is as unrelenting as any of them. *Let us therefore fear lest,* by a few bold steps at first in a sinful way, *our hearts be hardened.*

2. How he contrived to secure his disciples from their rage. He improved this advantage against them for the protection of his followers. When he shows his courage with reference to himself, *I have told you that I am he,* he shows his care for his disciples, *Let these go their way.* He speaks this as a command to them, rather than a contract

with them; for they lay at his mercy, not he at theirs. He charges them therefore as *one having authority: "Let these go their way;* it is at your peril if you meddle with them." This aggravated the sin of the disciples in forsaking him, and particularly Peter's in denying him, that Christ had given them this pass, or warrant of protection, and yet they had not faith and courage enough to rely upon it, but betook themselves to such base and sorry shifts for their security. When Christ said, *Let these go their way*, he intended,

(1.) To manifest his affectionate concern for his disciples. When he exposed himself, he excused them, because they were not as yet fit to suffer; their faith was weak, and their spirits were low, and it would have been as much as their souls, and the lives of their souls, were worth, to bring them into sufferings now. *New wine* must not be *put into old bottles.* And, besides, they had other work to do; they must go their way, for they are to go into all the world, to preach the gospel. *Destroy them not, for a blessing is in them.* Now herein, [1.] Christ gives us a great encouragement to follow him; for, though he has allotted us sufferings, yet he considers our frame, will wisely time the cross, and proportion it to our strength, and will *deliver the godly out of temptation*, either from it, or through it. [2.] He gives us a good example of love to our brethren and concern for their welfare. We must not consult our own ease and safety only, but others, as well as our own, and in some cases more than our own. There is a generous and heroic love, which will enable us to *lay down our lives for the brethren*, 1 John iii. 16.

(2.) He intended to give a specimen of his undertaking as Mediator. When he offered himself to suffer and die, it was that we might escape. He was our ἀντίψυχος—*a sufferer in our stead;* when he said, *Lo, I come*, he said also, *Let these go their way;* like the ram offered instead of Isaac.

3. Now herein he confirmed the word which he had spoken a little before (*ch.* xvii. 12), *Of those whom thou gavest me, I have lost none.* Christ, by fulfilling that word in this particular, gave an assurance that it should be accomplished in the full extent of it, not only for those that were now with him, but for all that should believe on him through their word. Though Christ's keeping them was meant especially of the preservation of their souls from sin and apostasy, yet it is here applied to the preservation of their natural lives, and very fitly, for even the body was a part of Christ's charge and care; he is to *raise it up at the last day*, and therefore to preserve it as well as *the spirit and soul*, 1 Thess. v. 23; 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18. Christ will preserve the natural life for the service to which it is designed; it is given to him to be used for him, and he will not lose the service of it, but will be magnified in it, *whether by life or death;* it shall be held in life as long as any use is to be made of it. Christ's witnesses shall not die till they have given in their evidence. But this is not all; this preservation of the disciples was, in the tendency of it, a spiritual preservation. They were now so weak in faith and resolution that in all probability, if they had been called out to suffer at this time, they would have shamed themselves and their Master, and some of them, at least the weaker of them, would have been lost; and therefore, that he might *lose none*, he would not expose them. The safety and preservation of the saints are owing, not only to the divine grace in proportioning the strength to the trial, but to the divine providence in proportioning the trial to the strength.

V. Having provided for the safety of his disciples, he rebukes the rashness of one of them, and represses the violence of his followers, as he had repulsed the violence of his persecutors, *v.* 10, 11, where we have,

1. Peter's rashness. He had a sword; it is not likely that he wore one constantly as a gentleman, but they had two swords among them all (Luke xxii. 38), and Peter, being entrusted with one, drew it; for now, if ever, he thought it was his time to use it; and *he smote one of the high priest's servants*, who was probably one of the forwardest, and aiming, it is likely, to cleave him down the head, missed his blow, and only *cut off his right ear. The servant's name*, for the greater certainty of the narrative, is recorded; it *was Malchus*, or *Malluch*, Neh. x. 4.

(1.) We must here acknowledge Peter's good-will; he had an honest zeal for his Master, though now misguided. He had lately promised to venture his life for him, and would now make his words good. Probably it exasperated Peter to see Judas at the head of this gang; his baseness excited Peter's boldness, and I wonder that when he did draw his sword he did not aim at the traitor's head.

(2.) Yet we must acknowledge Peter's ill conduct; and, though his good intention did excuse, yet it would not justify him. [1.] He had no warrant from his Master for what he did. Christ's soldiers must wait the word of command, and not outrun it; before they expose themselves to sufferings, they must see to it, not only that their cause be good, but their call clear. [2.] He transgressed the duty of his place, and resisted the powers that were, which Christ had never countenanced, but forbidden (Matt. v. 39): *that you resist not evil.* [3.] He opposed his Master's sufferings, and, notwithstanding the rebuke he had for it once, is ready to repeat, *Master, spare thyself;* suffering be *far from thee;* though Christ had told him that he must and would suffer, and that his hour was now come. Thus, while he seemed to fight for Christ, he fought against him. [4.] He

broke the capitulation his Master had lately made with the enemy. When he said, *Let these go their way,* he not only indented for their safety, but in effect passed his word for their good behaviour, that they should go away peaceably; this Peter heard, and yet would not be bound by it. As we may be guilty of a sinful cowardice when we are called to appear, so we may be of a sinful forwardness when we are called to retire. [5.] He foolishly exposed himself and his fellow disciples to the fury of this enraged multitude. If he had cut off Malchus's head when he cut off his ear, we may suppose the soldiers would have fallen upon all the disciples, and have hewn them to pieces, and would have represented Christ as no better than Barabbas. Thus many have been guilty of self-destruction, in their zeal for self-preservation. [6.] Peter played the coward so soon after this (denying his Master) that we have reason to think he would not have done this but that he saw his Master cause them to fall on the ground, and then he could deal with them; but, when he saw him surrender himself notwithstanding, his courage failed him; whereas the true Christian hero will appear in the cause of Christ, not only when it is prevailing, but when it seems to be declining; will be on the right side, though it be not the rising side.

(3.) We must acknowledge God's overruling providence in directing the stroke (so that it should do no more execution, but only cut off his ear, which was rather marking him than maiming him), as also in giving Christ an opportunity to manifest his power and goodness in healing the hurt, Luke xxii. 51. Thus what was in danger of turning to Christ's reproach proved an occasion of that which redounded much to his honour, even among his adversaries.

2. The rebuke his Master gave him (*v.* 11): *Put up thy sword into the sheath,* or scabbard; it is a gentle reproof, because it was his zeal that carried him beyond the bounds of discretion. Christ did not aggravate the matter, only bade him *do so no more.* Many think their being in grief and distress will excuse them if they be hot and hasty with those about them; but Christ has here set us an example of meekness in sufferings. Peter must put up his sword, for it was the *sword of the Spirit* that was to be committed to him—*weapons of warfare not carnal,* yet *mighty.* When Christ with a word felled the aggressors, he showed Peter how he should be armed with a *word, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,* and with that, not long after this, he laid Ananias and Sapphira dead at his feet.

3. The reason for this rebuke: *The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?* Matthew relates another reason which Christ gave for this rebuke, but John preserves this, which he had omitted; in which Christ gives us, (1.) A full proof of his own submission to his Father's will. Of all that was amiss in what Peter did, he seems to resent nothing so much as that he would have hindered his sufferings now that his *hour was come:* "What, *Peter,* wilt thou step in between the cup and the lip? *Get thee hence, Satan.*" If Christ be determined to suffer and die, it is presumption for Peter in word or deed to oppose it: *Shall I not drink it?* The manner of expression bespeaks a settled resolution, and that he would not entertain a thought to the contrary. He was willing to drink of this cup, though it was a bitter cup, an infusion of the wormwood and the gall, the cup of trembling, a bloody cup, the *dregs of the cup of the Lord's wrath,* Isa. li. 22. He drank it, that he might put into our hands the cup of salvation, the cup of consolation, the cup of blessing; and *therefore* he is willing to drink it, because *his Father put it into his hand.* If his Father will have it so, it is for the best, and be it so. (2.) A fair pattern to us of submission to God's will in every thing that concerns us. We must *pledge* Christ in the cup that he drank of (Matt. xx. 23), and must argue ourselves into a compliance. [1.] It is but a *cup;* a small matter comparatively, be it what it will. It is not a sea, a red sea, a dead sea, for it is not hell; it is light, and but for a moment. [2.] It is a cup that is given us; sufferings are gifts. [3.] It is given us by a Father, who has a Father's authority, and does us no wrong; a Father's affection, and means us no hurt.

VI. Having entirely reconciled himself to the dispensation, he calmly surrendered, and yielded himself a prisoner, not because he could not have made his escape, but because he would not. One would have thought the cure of Malchus's ear should have made them relent, but nothing would win upon them. *Maledictus furor, quem nec majestas miraculi nec pietas beneficii confringere potuit—Accursed rage, which the grandeur of the miracle could not appease, nor the tenderness of the favour conciliate.*—Anselm. Observe here,

1. How they seized him: *They took Jesus* Only some few of them could lay hands on him, but it is charged upon them all, for they were all aiding and abetting. In treason there are no accessaries; all are principals. Now the scripture was fulfilled, *Bulls have compassed me* (Ps. xxii. 12), *compassed me like bees,* Ps. cxviii. 12. *The breath of our nostrils is taken in their pit,* Lam. iv. 20. They had so often been frustrated in their attempts to seize him that now, having got him into their hands, we may suppose they flew upon him with so much the more violence.

2. How they secured him: *They bound him.* This particular of his sufferings is taken notice of only by this evangelist, that, as soon as ever he was taken, he was bound, pinioned, handcuffed; tradition says, "They bound him with such cruelty that the blood started out at his fingers' ends; and, having bound

his hands behind him, they clapped an iron chain about his neck, and with that dragged him along." See *Gerhard. Harm.* cap. 5.

(1.) This shows the spite of his persecutors. They bound him, [1.] That they might torment him, and put him in pain, as they bound Samson to afflict him. [2.] That they might disgrace him, and put him to shame; slaves were bound, so was Christ, though free-born. [3.] That they might prevent his escape, Judas having told them to hold him fast. See their folly, that they should think to fetter that power which had but just now proved itself omnipotent. [4.] They bound him as one already condemned, for they were resolved to prosecute him to the death, and that he should die as a fool dieth, that is, as a malefactor, with his hands bound, 2 Sam. iii. 33, 34. Christ had bound the consciences of his persecutors with the power of his word, which galled them; and, to be revenged on him, they laid these bonds on him.

(2.) Christ's being bound was very significant; in this as in other things there was a mystery. [1.] Before they bound him, he had bound himself by his own undertaking to the work and office of a Mediator. He was already bound to the horns of the altar with the cords of his own love to man, and duty to his Father, else their cords would not have held him. [2.] We were *bound with the cords of our iniquities* (Prov. v. 22), with the *yoke of our transgressions*, Lam. i. 14. Guilt is a bond on the soul, by which we are bound over to the judgment of God; corruption is a bond on the soul, by which we are bound under the power of Satan. Christ, being made sin for us, to free us from those bonds, himself submitted to be bound for us, else we had been bound hand and foot, and reserved in chains of darkness. To his bonds we owe our liberty; his confinement was our enlargement; thus the Son maketh us free. [3.] The types and prophecies of the Old Testament were herein accomplished. Isaac was bound, that he might be sacrificed; Joseph was bound, and the *irons entered into his soul*, in order to his being brought from prison to reign, Ps. cv. 18, &c. Samson was bound in order to his slaying more of the Philistines at his death than he had done in his life. And the Messiah was prophesied of as a prisoner, Isa. liii. 8. [4.] Christ was bound, that he might bind us to duty and obedience. His bonds for us are bonds upon us, by which we are for ever obliged to love him and serve him. Paul's salutation to his friends is Christ's to us all: "*Remember my bonds* (Col. iv. 18), remember them as bound with him from all sin, and to all duty." [5.] Christ's bonds for us were designed to make our bonds for him easy to us, if at any time we be so called out to suffer for him, to sanctify and sweeten them, and put honour upon them; these enabled Paul and Silas to sing in the stocks, and Ignatius to call his bonds for Christ spiritual pearls.—*Epist. ad Ephes.*

13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. 14 Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. 15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. 16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. 18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. 19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. 20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. 21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. 22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? 23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? 24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. 25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also *one* of his disciples? He denied *it*, and said, I am not. 26 One of the servants of the high priest, being *his* kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? 27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

We have here an account of Christ's ar-

raignment before the high priest, and some circumstances that occurred therein which were omitted by the other evangelists; and Peter's denying him, which the other evangelists had given the story of entire by itself, is interwoven with the other passages. The crime laid to his charge having relation to religion, the judges of the spiritual court took it to fall directly under their cognizance. Both Jews and Gentiles seized him, and so both Jews and Gentiles tried and condemned him, for he died for the sins of both. Let us go over the story in order.

I. Having seized him, they *led him away to Annas first*, before they brought him to the court that was sat, expecting him, in the house of Caiaphas, *v.* 13. 1. They *led him away*, led him in triumph, as a trophy of their victory; led him *as a lamb to the slaughter*, and they led him through the sheep-gate spoken of Neh. iii. 1. For through that they went from the mount of Olives into Jerusalem. They hurried him away with violence, as if he had been the worst and vilest of malefactors. We had been led away of our own impetuous lusts, and led captive by Satan at his will, and, that we might be rescued, Christ was led away, led captive by Satan's agents and instruments. 2. They led him away to their masters that sent them. It was now about midnight, and one would think they should have put him in ward (Lev. xxiv. 12), should have led him to some prison, till it was a proper time to call a court; but he is hurried away immediately, not to the justices of peace, to be committed, but to the judges to be condemned; so extremely violent was the prosecution, partly because they feared a rescue, which they would thus not only leave no time for, but give a terror to; partly because they greedily thirsted after Christ's blood, as *the eagle that hasteth to the prey*. 3. They led him to Annas first. Probably his house lay in the way, and was convenient for them to call at to refresh themselves, and, as some think, to be paid for their service. I suppose Annas was old and infirm, and could not be present in council with the rest at that time of night, and yet earnestly desired to see the prey. To gratify him therefore with the assurance of their success, that the old man might sleep the better, and to receive his blessing for it, they produce their prisoner before him. It is sad to see those that are old and sickly, when they cannot commit sin as formerly, taking pleasure in those that do. Dr. Lightfoot thinks Annas was not present, because he had to attend early that morning in the temple, to examine the sacrifices which were that day to be offered, whether they were without blemish: if so, there was a significancy in it, that Christ, the great sacrifice, was presented to him, and sent away bound, as approved and ready for the altar. 4. This Annas was father-in-law to Caiaphas the high priest; this kindred by marriage between them comes in as a reason either why Caiaphas ordered that this piece of respect should be done to Annas, to favour him with the first sight of the prisoner, or why Annas was willing to countenance Caiaphas in a matter his heart was so much upon. Note, Acquaintance and alliance with wicked people are a great confirmation to many in their wicked ways.

II. Annas did not long detain them, being as willing as any of them to have the prosecution pushed on, and therefore sent him bound to Caiaphas, to his house, which was appointed for the rendezvous of the sanhedrim upon this occasion, or to the usual place in the temple where the high priest kept his court; this is mentioned, *v.* 24. But our translators intimate in the margin that it should come in here, and, accordingly, read it there, *Annas had sent him.* Observe here,

1. The power of Caiaphas intimated (*v.* 13). He was *high priest that same year.* The high priest's commission was during life; but there were now such frequent changes, by the Simoniacal artifices of aspiring men with the government, that it was become almost an annual office, a presage of its final period approaching; while they were undermining one another, God was overturning them all, that he might come whose right it was. Caiaphas was high priest that same year when Messiah was to be cut off, which intimates, (1.) That when a bad thing was to be done by a high priest, according to the foreknowledge of God, Providence so ordered it that a bad man should be in the chair to do it. (2.) That, when God would make it to appear what corruption there was in the heart of a bad man, he put him into a place of power, where he had temptation and opportunity to exert it. It was the ruin of Caiaphas that he was high priest that year, and so became a ringleader in the putting of Christ to death. Many a man's advancement has lost him his reputation, and he had not been dishonoured if he had not been preferred.

2. The malice of Caiaphas, which is intimated (*v.* 14) by the repeating of what he had said some time before, that, right or wrong, guilty or innocent, *it was expedient that one man should die for the people*, which refers to the story *ch.* xi. 50. This comes in here to show, (1.) What a bad man he was; this was that Caiaphas that governed himself and the church by rules of policy, in defiance of the rules of equity. (2.) What ill usage Christ was likely to meet with in his court, when his case was adjudged before it was heard, and they were already resolved what to do with him; *he must die;* so that his trial was a jest. Thus the enemies of Christ's gospel are resolved, true or false, to run it down. (3.) It is a testimony to the innocency of our Lord Jesus, from the mouth of one of his worst enemies, who owned that he fell a sacrifice to the public good, and that it

was not just he should die, but *expedient* only.

3. The concurrence of Annas in the prosecution of Christ. He made himself a partaker in guilt, (1.) With the captain and officers, that without law or mercy had bound him; for he approved it by continuing him bound when he should have loosed him, he not being convicted of any crime, nor having attempted an escape. If we do not what we can to undo what others have ill done, we are accessaries *ex post facto—after the fact.* It was more excusable in the rude soldiers to bind him than in Annas, who should have known better, to continue him bound. (2.) With the chief priest and council that condemned him, and prosecuted him to death. This Annas was not present with them, yet thus he wished them *good speed*, and became a *partaker of their evil deeds.*

III. In the house of Caiaphas, Simon Peter began to deny his Master, *v.* 15—18.

1. It was with much ado that Peter got into the hall where the court was sitting, an account of which we have *v.* 15, 16. Here we may observe,

(1.) Peter's kindness to Christ, which (though it proved no kindness) appeared in two things:—[1.] That he *followed Jesus* when he was *led away;* though at first he fled with the rest, yet afterwards he took heart a little, and followed at some distance, calling to mind the promises he had made to adhere to him, whatever it should cost him. Those that had followed Christ in the midst of his honours, and shared with him in those honours, when the people cried Hosanna to him, ought to have followed him now in the midst of his reproaches, and to have shared with him in these. Those that truly love and value Christ will follow him all weathers and all ways. [2.] When he could not get in where Jesus was in the midst of his enemies, he *stood at the door without*, willing to be as near him as he could, and waiting for an opportunity to get nearer. Thus when we meet with opposition in following Christ we must show our good-will. But yet this kindness of Peter's was no kindness, because he had not strength and courage enough to persevere in it, and so, as it proved, he did but run himself into a snare: and even his following Christ, considering all things, was to be blamed, because Christ, who knew him better than he knew himself, had expressly told him (*ch.* xiii. 36), *Whither I go thou canst not follow me now*, and had told him again and again that he would deny him; and he had lately had experience of his own weakness in forsaking him. Note, We must take heed of tempting God by running upon difficulties beyond our strength, and venturing too far in a way of suffering. If our call be clear to expose ourselves, we may hope that God will enable us to honour him; but, if it be not, we may fear that God will leave us to shame ourselves.

(2.) The other disciple's kindness to Peter, which yet, as it proved, was no kindness neither. St. John several times in this gospel speaking of himself as another disciple, many interpreters have been led by this to fancy that this other disciple here was John; and many conjectures they have how he should come to be known to the high-priest; *propter generis nobilitatem—being of superior birth*, saith *Jerome, Epitaph. Marcel.*, as if he were a better gentleman born than his brother James, when they were both the sons of Zebedee the fisherman: some will tell you that he had sold his estate to the high priest, others that he supplied his family with fish, both which are very improbable. But I see no reason to think that this other disciple was John, or one of the twelve; other sheep Christ had, which were not of the fold; and this might be, as the Syriac reads it, *unus ex discipulis aliis—one of those other disciples* that believed in Christ, but resided at Jerusalem, and kept their places there; perhaps Joseph of Arimathea, or Nicodemus, known to the high priest, but not known to him to be disciples of Christ. Note, As there are many who seem disciples and are not so, so there are many who are disciples and seem not so. There are good people hid in courts, even in Nero's, as well as hid in crowds. We must not conclude a man to be no friend to Christ merely because he has acquaintance and conversation with those that were his known enemies. Now, [1.] This other disciple, whoever he was, showed a respect to Peter, in introducing him, not only to gratify his curiosity and affection, but to give him an opportunity of being serviceable to his Master upon his trial, if there were occasion. Those that have a real kindness for Christ and his ways, though their temper may be reserved and their circumstances may lead them to be cautious and retired, yet, if their faith be sincere, they will discover, when they are called to it, which way their inclination lies, by being ready to do a professed disciple a good turn. Peter perhaps had formerly introduced this disciple into conversation with Christ, and now he requites his kindness, and is not ashamed to own him, though, it should seem, he had at this time but a poor downcast appearance. [2.] But this kindness proved no kindness, nay a great diskindness; by letting him into the high priest's hall, he let him into temptation, and the consequence was bad. Note, The courtesies of our friends often prove a snare to us, through a misguided affection.

2. Peter, having got in, was immediately assaulted with the temptation, and foiled by it, *v.* 17. Observe here,

(1.) How slight the attack was. It was but a silly maid, of so small account that she was set to keep the door, that challenged him, and she only asked him carelessly, *Art not thou one of this man's disciples?* probably suspecting it by his sheepish look, and coming in timorously.

We should many a time better maintain a good cause if we had a *good heart on it*, and could put a *good face on it*. Peter would have had some reason to take the alarm if Malchus had set upon him, and had said, "This is he that cut off my ear, and I will have his head for it;" but when a maid only asked him, *Art not thou one of them?* he might without danger have answered, *And what if I am?* Suppose the servants had ridiculed him, and insulted over him, upon it, those can bear but little for Christ that cannot *bear this;* this is but *running with the footmen.*

(2.) How speedy the surrender was. Without taking time to recollect himself, he suddenly answered, *I am not.* If he had had the boldness of the lion, he would have said, "It is my honour that I am so;" or, if he had had the wisdom of the serpent, he would have kept silence at this time, for it was an evil time. But, all his care being for his own safety, he thought he could not secure this but by a peremptory denial: *I am not;* he not only denies it, but even disdains it, and scorns her words.

(3.) Yet he goes further into the temptation: *And the servants and officers stood there, and Peter with them, v.* 18.

[1.] See how the servants made much of themselves; the night being cold, they made a fire in the hall, not for their masters (they were so eager in persecuting Christ that they forgot cold), but for themselves to refresh themselves. They cared not what became of Christ; all their care was to sit and warm themselves, Amos vi. 6.

[2.] See how Peter herded himself with them, and made one among them. *He sat and warmed himself. First,* It was a fault bad enough that he did not attend his Master, and appear for him at the upper end of the hall, where he was now under examination. He might have been a witness for him, and have confronted the false witnesses that swore against him, if his Master had called him; at least, he might have been a witness to him, might have taken an exact notice of what passed, that he might relate it to the other disciples, who could none of them get in to hear the trial; he might have learned by his Master's example how to carry himself when it should come to his turn to suffer thus; yet neither his conscience nor his curiosity could bring him into the court, but he sits by, as if, like Gallio, he cared for none of these things. And yet at the same time we have reason to think his heart was as full of grief and concern as it could hold, but he had not the courage to own it. *Lord, lead us not into temptation. Secondly,* It was much worse that he joined himself with those that were his Master's enemies: *He stood with them, and warmed himself;* this was a poor excuse for joining with them. A little thing will draw those into bad company that will be drawn to it by the love of a good fire. If Peter's zeal for his Master had not frozen, but had continued in the heat it seemed to be of but a few hours before, he had not had occasion to warm himself now. Peter was much to be blamed, 1. Because he associated with these wicked men, and kept company with them. Doubtless they were diverting themselves with this night's expedition, scoffing at Christ, at what he had said, at what he had done, and triumphing in their victory over him; and what sort of entertainment would this give to Peter? If he said as they said, or by silence gave consent, he involved himself in sin; if not, he exposed himself to danger. If Peter had not so much courage as to appear publicly for his Master, yet he might have had so much devotion as to retire into a corner, and weep in secret for his Master's sufferings, and his own sin in forsaking him; if he could not have done good, he might have kept out of the way of doing hurt. It is better to abscond than appear to no purpose, or bad purpose. 2. Because he desired to be thought *one of them,* that he might not be suspected to be a disciple of Christ. Is this Peter? What a contradiction is this to the prayer of every good man, *Gather not my soul with sinners! Saul among the prophets* is not so absurd as David among the Philistines. Those that deprecate the lot of the scornful hereafter should dread the *seat of the scornful* now. It is ill warming ourselves with those with whom we are in danger of burning ourselves, Ps. cxli. 4.

IV. Peter, Christ's friend, having begun to deny him, the high priest, his enemy, begins to accuse him, or rather urges him to accuse himself, *v.* 19—21. It should seem, the first attempt was to prove him a seducer, and a teacher of false doctrine, which this evangelist relates; and, when they failed in the proof of this, then they charged him with blasphemy, which is related by the other evangelists, and therefore omitted here. Observe,

1. The articles or heads upon which Christ was examined (*v.* 19): concerning *his disciples and his doctrine.* Observe,

(1.) The irregularity of the process; it was against all law and equity. They seize him as a criminal, and now that he is their prisoner they have nothing to *lay to his charge;* no libel, no prosecutor; but the judge himself must be the prosecutor, and the prisoner himself the witness, and, against all reason and justice, he is put on to be his own accuser.

(2.) The intention. The *high priest then* (οὖν—*therefore*, which seems to refer to *v.* 14), because he had resolved that Christ must be sacrificed to their private malice under colour of the public good, examined him upon those interrogatories which would touch his life. He examined him, [1.] Concerning his disciples, that he might charge him with sedition, and represent him as dan-

gerous to the Roman government, as well as to the Jewish church. He asked him who were his disciples—what number they were—of what country—what were their names and characters, insinuating that his scholars were designed for soldiers, and would in time become a formidable body. Some think his question concerning his disciples was, "What is now become of them all? Where are they? Why do they not appear?" upbraiding him with their cowardice in deserting him, and thus adding to the affliction of it. There was something significant in this, that Christ's calling and owning his disciples was the first thing laid to his charge, for it was *for their sakes* that he *sanctified himself* and suffered. [2.] Concerning his doctrine, that they might charge him with heresy, and bring him under the penalty of the law against false prophets, Deut. xiii. 9, 10. This was a matter properly cognizable in that court (Deut. xvii. 12), therefore a prophet could not perish but at Jerusalem, where that court sat. They could not prove any false doctrine upon him; but they hoped to extort something from him which they might distort to his prejudice, and to make him an offender for some word or other, Isa. xxix. 21. They said nothing to him concerning his miracles, by which he had done so much good, and proved his doctrine beyond contradiction, because of these they were sure they could take no hold. Thus the adversaries of Christ, while they are industriously quarrelling with his truth, wilfully shut their eyes against the evidences of it, and take no notice of them.

2. The appeal Christ made, in answer to these interrogatories. (1.) As to his disciples, he said nothing, because it was an impertinent question; if his doctrine was sound and good, his having disciples to whom to communicate it was no more than what was practised and allowed by their own doctors. If Caiaphas, in asking him concerning his disciples, designed to ensnare them, and bring them into trouble, it was in kindness to them that Christ said nothing of them, for he had said, *Let these go their way.* If he meant to upbraid him with their cowardice, no wonder that he said nothing, for

> Rudet hæc opprobria nobis,
> Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli—
>
> Shame attaches when charges are exhibited that cannot be refuted:

he would say nothing to condemn them, and could say nothing to justify them. (2.) As to his doctrine, he said nothing in particular, but in general referred himself to those that heard him, being not only made manifest to God, but made manifest also in their consciences, *v.* 20, 21.

[1.] He tacitly charges his judges with illegal proceedings. He does not indeed speak evil of the rulers of the people, nor say now to these princes, *You are wicked;* but he appeals to the settled rules of their own court, whether they dealt fairly by him. *Do you indeed judge righteously?* Ps. lviii. 1. So here, *Why ask you me?* Which implies two absurdities in judgment: *First,* "*Why ask you me now* concerning my doctrine, when you have already condemned it?" They had made an order of court for excommunicating all that owned him (*ch.* ix. 22), had issued out a proclamation for apprehending him; and now they come to ask what his doctrine is! Thus was he condemned, as his doctrine and cause commonly are, unheard. *Secondly,* "*Why ask you me?* Must I accuse myself, when you have no evidence against me?"

[2.] He insists upon his fair and open dealing with them in the publication of his doctrine, and justifies himself with this. The crime which the sanhedrim by the law was to enquire after was the clandestine spreading of dangerous doctrines, enticing secretly, Deut. xiii. 6. As to this, therefore, Christ clears himself very fully. *First,* As to the manner of his preaching. He spoke openly, *παῤῥησία—with freedom and plainness of speech;* he did not deliver things ambiguously, as Apollo did his oracles. Those that would undermine the truth, and spread corrupt notions, seek to accomplish their purpose by sly insinuations, putting queries, starting difficulties, and asserting nothing; but Christ explained himself fully, with, *Verily, verily, I say unto you;* his reproofs were free and bold, and his testimonies express against the corruptions of the age. *Secondly,* As to the persons he preached to: *He spoke to the world,* to all that had *ears to hear,* and were willing to hear him, high or low, learned or unlearned, Jew or Gentile, friend or foe. His doctrine feared not the censure of a mixed multitude; nor did he grudge the knowledge of it to any (as the masters of some rare invention commonly do), but freely communicated it, as the sun does his beams. *Thirdly,* As to the places he preached in. When he was in the country, he preached ordinarily in the synagogues—the places of meeting for worship, and on the sabbath-day—the time of meeting; when he came up to Jerusalem, he preached the same doctrine in the temple at the time of the solemn feasts, when the Jews from all parts assembled there; and though he often preached in private houses, and on mountains, and by the sea-side, to show that his word and worship were not to be confined to temples and synagogues, yet what he preached in private was the very same with what he delivered publicly. Note, The doctrine of Christ, purely and plainly preached, needs not be ashamed to appear in the most numerous assembly, for it carries its own strength and beauty along with it. What Christ's faithful ministers say they would be willing all the world should hear. Wisdom cries in the places of concourse, Prov. i. 21; viii. 3; ix. 3. *Fourthly,* As to the doctrine itself. He *said nothing in secret* contrary to what he said in public, but only by way of

repetition and explication: *In secret have I said nothing;* as if he had been either suspicious of the truth of it, or conscious of any ill design in it. He sought no corners, for he feared no colours, nor said any thing that he needed to be ashamed of; what he did speak in private to his disciples he ordered them to proclaim on the house-tops, Matt. x. 27. God saith of himself (Isa. xlv. 19), *I have not spoken in secret;* his commandment is not hidden, Deut. xxx. 11. And the righteousness of faith speaks in like manner, Rom. x. 6. *Veritas nihil metuit nisi abscondi—truth fears nothing but concealment.*—Tertullian.

[3.] He appeals to those that had heard him, and desires that they might be examined what doctrine he had preached, and whether it had that dangerous tendency that was surmised: "*Ask those that heard me what I said unto them;* some of them may be in court, or may be sent for out of their beds." He means not his friends and followers, who might be presumed to speak in his favour, but, Ask any impartial hearer; ask your own officers. Some think he pointed to them, when he said, *Behold, they know what I said,* referring to the report which they had made of his preaching (*ch.* vii. 46), *Never man spoke like this man.* Nay, you may ask some upon the bench; for it is probable that some of them had heard him, and had been put to silence by him. Note, The doctrine of Christ may safely appeal to all that know it, and has so much right and reason on its side that those who will judge impartially cannot but witness to it.

V. While the judges were examining him, the servants that stood by were abusing him, *v.* 22, 23.

1. It was a base affront which one of the officers gave him; though he spoke with so much calmness and convincing evidence, this insolent fellow *struck him with the palm of his hand,* probably on the side of his head or face, saying, *Answerest thou the high priest so?* as if he had behaved himself rudely to the court.

(1.) He *struck him,* ἔδωκε ῥάπισμα—*he gave him a blow.* Some think it signifies a blow with a rod or wand, from ῥάβδος, or with the staff which was the badge of his office. Now the scripture was fulfilled (Isa. l. 6), *I gave my cheeks,* εἰς ῥαπίσματα (so the LXX.) *to blows,* the word here used. And Mic. v. 1, *They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek;* and the type answered (Job xvi. 10), *They have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully.* It was unjust to strike one that neither said nor did amiss; it was insolent for a mean servant to strike one that was confessedly a person of account; it was cowardly to strike one that had his hands tied; and barbarous to strike a prisoner at the bar. Here was a breach of the peace in the face of the court, and yet the judges countenanced it. Confusion of face was our due; but Christ here took it to himself: "Upon me be the curse, the shame."

(2.) He checked him in a haughty imperious manner: *Answerest thou the high priest so?* As if the blessed Jesus were not good enough to speak to his master, or not wise enough to know how to speak to him, but, like a rude and ignorant prisoner, must be controlled by the jailor, and taught how to behave. Some of the ancients suggest that this officer was Malchus, who owed to Christ the healing of his ear, and the saving of his head, and yet made him this ill return. But, whoever it was, it was done to please the high priest, and to curry favour with him; for what he said implied a jealousy for the dignity of the high priest. Wicked rulers will not want wicked servants, who will *help forward the affliction* of those whom their masters persecute. There was a successor of this high priest that commanded the bystanders to smite Paul thus *on the mouth,* Acts xxiii. 2. Some think this officer took himself to be affronted by Christ's appeal to those about him concerning his doctrine, as if he would have vouched him to be a witness; and perhaps he was one of those officers that had spoken honourably of him (*ch.* vii. 46), and, lest he should now be thought a secret friend to him, he thus appears a bitter enemy.

2. Christ bore this affront with wonderful meekness and patience (*v.* 23): "*If I have spoken evil,* in what I have now said, *bear witness of the evil.* Observe it to the court, and let them judge of it, who are the proper judges; but if well, and as it did become me, *why smitest thou me?*" Christ could have answered him with a miracle of wrath, could have struck him dumb or dead, or have withered the hand that was lifted up against him. But this was the day of his patience and suffering, and he answered him with the *meekness of wisdom,* to teach us not to avenge ourselves, not to render *railing for railing,* but with the *innocency of the dove* to bear injuries, even when with the *wisdom of the serpent,* as our Saviour, we show the injustice of them, and appeal to the magistrate concerning them. Christ did not here *turn the other cheek,* by which it appears that that rule, Matt. v. 39, is not to be understood literally; a man may possibly *turn the other cheek,* and yet have his heart full of malice; but, comparing Christ's precept with his pattern, we learn, (1.) That in such cases we must not be our own avengers, nor judges in our own cause. We must rather receive than give the second blow, which makes the quarrel; we are allowed to defend ourselves, but not to avenge ourselves: the magistrate (if it be necessary for the preserving of the public peace, and the restraining and terrifying of evil-doers) is to be the avenger, Rom. xiii. 4. (2.) Our resentment of injuries done us must always be rational, and never passionate; such Christ's here was; *when he*

suffered, he reasoned, but *threatened not*. He fairly expostulated with him that did him the injury, and so may we. (3.) When we are called out to suffering, we must *accommodate ourselves* to the inconveniences of a suffering state, with patience, and by one indignity done us be prepared to receive another, and to make the best of it.

VI. While the servants were thus abusing him, Peter was proceeding to deny him, *v.* 25—27. It is a sad story, and none of the least of Christ's sufferings.

1. He repeated the sin the second time, *v.* 25. While he was warming himself with the servants, as one of them, they asked him, *Art not thou one of his disciples?* What dost thou here among us? He, perhaps, hearing that Christ was examined about his disciples, and fearing he should be seized, or at least smitten, as his Master was, if he should own it, flatly denied it, and said, *I am not.*

(1.) It was his great folly to thrust himself into the temptation, by continuing in the company of those that were unsuitable for him, and that he had nothing to do with. He staid to warm himself; but those that warm themselves with evil doers grow cold towards good people and good things, and those that are fond of the devil's fire-side are in danger of the devil's fire. Peter might have stood by his Master at the bar, and have warmed himself better than here, at the fire of his Master's love, which *many waters could not quench*, Cant. viii. 6, 7. He might there have warmed himself with zeal for his Master, and indignation at his persecutors; but he chose rather to warm with them than to warm against them. But how could one (one disciple) be warm alone? Eccl. iv. 11.

(2.) It was his great unhappiness that he was again assaulted by the temptation; and no other could be expected, for this was a place, this an hour, of temptation. When the judge asked Christ about his disciples, probably the servants took the hint, and challenged Peter for one of them, "Answer to thy name." See here, [1.] The subtlety of the tempter in running down one whom he saw falling, and mustering a greater force against him; not a maid now, but all the servants. Note, Yielding to one temptation invites another, and perhaps a stronger. Satan redoubles his attacks when we give ground. [2.] The danger of bad company. We commonly study to approve ourselves to those with whom we choose to associate; we value ourselves upon their good word and covet to stand right in their opinion. As we choose our people we choose our praise, and govern ourselves accordingly; we are therefore concerned to make the first choice well, and not to mingle with those whom we cannot please without displeasing God.

(3.) It was his great weakness, nay, it was his great wickedness, to yield to the temptation, and to say, *I am not one* of his disciples, as one ashamed of that which was his honour, and afraid of suffering for it, which would have been yet more his honour. See how the *fear of man brings a snare.* When Christ was admired, and caressed, and treated with respect, Peter pleased himself, and perhaps prided himself, in this, that he was a disciple of Christ, and so put in for a share in the honours done to his Master. Thus many who seem fond of the reputation of religion when it is in fashion are ashamed of the reproach of it; but we must take it *for better and worse.*

2. He repeated the sin the third time, *v.* 26, 27. Here he was attacked by one of the servants, who was kinsman to Malchus, who, when he heard Peter deny himself to be a disciple of Christ, gave him the lie with great assurance: "*Did not I see thee in the garden with him?* Witness my kinsman's ear." Peter then denied again, as if he knew nothing of Christ, nothing of the garden, nothing of all this matter.

(1.) This third assault of the temptation was more close than the former: before his relation to Christ was only suspected, here it is proved upon him by one that saw him with Jesus, and saw him draw his sword in his defence. Note, Those who by sin think to help themselves out of trouble do but entangle and embarrass themselves the more. Dare to be brave, for truth will out. *A bird of the air* may perhaps *tell the matter* which we seek to conceal with a lie. Notice is taken of this servant's being akin to Malchus, because this circumstance would make it the more a terror to Peter. "Now," thinks he, "I am gone, my business is done, there needs no other witness nor prosecutor." We should not make any man in particular our enemy if we can help it, because the time may come when either he or some of his relations may have us at their mercy. He that may need a friend should not make a foe. But observe, though here was sufficient evidence against Peter, and sufficient provocation given by his denial to have prosecuted him, yet he escapes, has no harm done him nor attempted to be done. Note, We are often drawn into sin by groundless causeless fears, which there is no occasion for, and which a small degree of wisdom and resolution would make nothing of.

(2.) His yielding to it was no less base than the former: *He denied again.* See here, [1.] The nature of sin in general: *the heart is hardened by the deceitfulness of it*, Heb. iii. 13. It was a strange degree of effrontery that Peter had arrived to on a sudden, that he could with such assurance stand in a lie against so clear a disproof; but *the beginning of sin is as the letting forth of water*, when once the fence is broken men easily go from bad to worse. [2.] Of the sin of lying in particular; it is a fruitful sin, and upon this account *exceedingly sinful;* one lie needs another to support it, and that another. It is a rule in the devil's politics, *Malè facta malè factis tegere, ne perpluant—To cover sin with sin, in order to escape detection.*

(3.) The hint given him for the awakening of his conscience was seasonable and happy: *Immediately the cock crew;* and this is all that is here said of his repentance, it being recorded by the other evangelists. This brought him to himself, by bringing to his mind the words of Christ. See here, [1.] The care Christ has of those that are his, notwithstanding their follies; though *they fall, they are not utterly cast down,* not utterly cast off. [2.] The advantage of having faithful remembrancers near us, who, though they cannot tell us more than we know already, yet may remind us of that which we know, but have forgotten. The crowing of the cock to others was an accidental thing, and had no significancy; but to Peter it was the voice of God, and had a blessed tendency to awaken his conscience, by putting him in mind of the word of Christ.

28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. 29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? 30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. 31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32 That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. 33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault *at all.* 39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover; will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

We have here an account of Christ's arraignment before Pilate, the Roman governor, in the *prætorium* (a Latin word made Greek), the prætor's house, or *hall of judgment;* thither they hurried him, to get him condemned in the Roman court, and executed by the Roman power. Being resolved on his death, they took this course, 1. That he might be put to death the more legally and regularly, according to the present constitution of their government, since they became a province of the empire; not stoned in a popular tumult, as Stephen, but put to death with the present formalities of justice. Thus he was treated as a malefactor, *being made sin for us.* 2. That he might be put to death the more safely. If they could engage the Roman government in the matter, which the people stood in awe of, there would be little danger of an uproar. 3. That he might be put to death with more reproach to himself. *The death of the cross,* which the Romans commonly used, being of all deaths the most ignominious, they were desirous by it to put an indelible mark of infamy upon him, and so to sink his reputation for ever. This therefore they harped upon, *Crucify him.* 4. That he might be put to death with less reproach to them. It was an invidious thing to put one to death that had done so much good in the world, and therefore they were willing to throw the odium upon the Roman government, to make that the less acceptable to the people, and save themselves from the reproach. Thus many are more afraid of the scandal of a bad action than of the sin of it. See Acts v. 28. Two things are here observed concerning the prosecution:—(1.) Their policy and industry in the prosecution: *It was early;* some think about two or three in the morning, others about five or six, when most people were in their beds; and so there would be the less danger of opposition from the people that were for Christ; while, at the same time, they had their agents about, to call those together whom they could influence to cry out against him. See how much their heart was upon it, and how violent they were in the prosecution. Now that they had him in their hands, they would lose no time till

they had him upon the cross, but denied themselves their natural rest, to push on this matter. See Mic. ii. 1. (2.) Their superstition and vile hypocrisy: *The chief priests and elders*, though they came along with the prisoner, that the thing might be done effectually, *went not into the judgment-hall*, because it was the house of an uncircumcised Gentile, *lest they should be defiled*, but kept out of doors, *that they might eat the passover*, not the paschal lamb (that was eaten the night before) but the passover-feast, upon the sacrifices which were offered on the fifteenth day, *the Chagigah*, as they called it, the passover-bullocks spoken of Deut. xvi. 2; 2 Chron. xxx. 24; xxxv. 8, 9. These they were to eat of, and therefore would not go into the court, for fear of touching a Gentile, and thereby contracting, not a legal, but only a traditional pollution. This they scrupled, but made no scruple of breaking through all the laws of equity to persecute Christ to the death. *They strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel.* Let us now see what passed at *the judgment-hall.* Here is,

I. Pilate's conference with the prosecutors. They were called first, and stated what they had to say against the prisoner, as was very fit, *v.* 29—32.

1. The judge calls for the indictment. Because they would not come into the hall, *he went out to them* into the court before the house, to talk with them. Looking upon Pilate as a magistrate, that we may give every one his due, here are three things commendable in him:—(1.) His diligent and close application to business. If it had been upon a good occasion, it had been very well that he was willing to be called up early to the judgment-seat. Men in public trusts must not love their ease. (2.) His condescending to the humour of the people, and receding from the honour of his place to gratify their scruples. He might have said, "If they be so nice as not to come in to me, let them go home as they came;" by the same rule as we might say, "If the complainant scruple to take off his hat to the magistrate, let not his complaint be heard;" but Pilate insists not upon it, bears with them, and goes out to them; for, when it is for good, we should *become all things to all men.* (3.) His adherence to the rule of justice, in demanding the accusation, suspecting the prosecution to be malicious: "*What accusation bring you against this man?* What is the crime you charge him with, and what proof have you of it? It was a law of nature, before Valerius Publicola made it a Roman law, *Ne quis indicta causa condemnetur—No man should be condemned unheard.* See Acts xxv. 16, 17. It is unreasonable to commit a man, without alleging some cause in the warrant, and much more to arraign a man when there is no bill of indictment found against him.

2. The prosecutors demand judgment against him upon a general surmise that he was a criminal, not alleging, much less proving, any thing in particular *worthy of death or of bonds* (*v.* 30): *If he were not a malefactor*, or evil-doer, *we would not have delivered him to thee* to be condemned. This bespeaks them, (1.) Very rude and uncivil to Pilate, a company of ill-natured men, that affected to despise dominion. When Pilate was so complaisant to them as to come out to treat with them, yet they were to the highest degree out of humour with him. He put the most reasonable question to them that could be; but, if it had been the most absurd, they could not have answered him with more disdain. (2.) Very spiteful and malicious towards our Lord Jesus: right or wrong, they will have him to be a malefactor, and treated as one. We are to presume a man innocent till he is proved guilty, but they will presume him guilty who could prove himself innocent. They cannot say, "He is a traitor, a murderer, a felon, a breaker of the peace," but they say, "He is an evil-doer." He an evil-doer who *went about doing good!* Let those be called whom he has cured, and fed, and taught; whom he has rescued from devils, and raised from death; and let them be asked whether he be an evil-doer or no. Note, It is no new thing for the best of benefactors to be branded and run down as the worst of malefactors. (3.) Very proud and conceited of themselves, and their own judgment and justice, as if their delivering a man up, under the general character of a malefactor, were sufficient for the civil magistrate to ground a judicial sentence upon, than which what could be more haughty?

3. The judge remands him to their own court (*v.* 31): "*Take you him, and judge him according to your* own *law*, and do not trouble me with him." Now, (1.) Some think Pilate herein complimented them, acknowledging the remains of their power, and allowing them to exert it. Corporal punishment they might inflict, as *scourging in their synagogues;* whether capital or no is uncertain. "But," saith Pilate, "go as far as your law will allow you, and, if you go further, it shall be connived at." This he said, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, but unwilling to do them the service they required. (2.) Others think he bantered them, and upbraided them with their present state of weakness and subjection. They would be the sole judges of the guilt. "Pray," saith Pilate, "if you will be so, go on as you have begun; you have found him guilty by your own law, condemn him, if you dare, by your own law, to carry on the humour." Nothing is more absurd, nor more deserves to be exposed, than for those to pretend to dictate, and boast of their wisdom, who are weak and in subordinate stations, and whose lot it is to be dictated to. Some think Pilate here reflects upon the law of Moses, as if it allowed them what the Roman law would by no means allow—the judging of a man unheard. "It may be your law wil

suffer such a thing, but ours will not." Thus, through their corruptions, the law of God was blasphemed; and so is his gospel too.

4. They disown any authority as judges, and (since it must be so) are content to be prosecutors. They now grow less insolent and more submissive, and own, "*It is not lawful for us to put any man to death,* whatever less punishment we may inflict, and this is a malefactor whom we would have the blood of."

(1.) Some think they had lost their power to give judgment in matters of life and death only by their own carelessness, and cowardly yielding to the darling iniquities of the age; so Dr. Lightfoot οὐκ ἔξεστι—*It is not* in our power to pass sentence of death upon *any,* if we do, we shall have the mob about us immediately.

(2.) Others think their power was taken from them by the Romans, because they had not used it well, or because it was thought too great a trust to be lodged in the hands of a conquered and yet an unsubdued people. Their acknowledgment of this they designed for a compliment to Pilate, and to atone for their rudeness (*v.* 30), but it amounts to a full evidence that *the sceptre was departed from Judah,* and therefore that now the Messiah was come, Gen. xlix. 10. If the Jews have no power *to put any man to death,* where is the sceptre? Yet they ask not, *Where is the Shiloh?*

(3.) However, there was a providence in it, that either they should have no power to put any man to death, or should decline the exercise of it upon this occasion, *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spoke, signifying what death he should die, v.* 32. Observe, [1.] In general, that even those who designed the defeating of Christ's sayings were, beyond their intention, made serviceable to the fulfilling of them by an overruling hand of God. *No word of Christ shall fall to the ground;* he can never either deceive or be deceived. Even *the chief priests,* while they persecuted him as *a deceiver,* had their spirit so directed as to help to prove him true, when we should think that by taking other measures they might have defeated his predictions. *Howbeit, they meant not so,* Isa. x. 7. [2.] Those sayings of Christ in particular were fulfilled which he had spoken concerning his own death. Two sayings of Christ concerning his death were fulfilled, by the Jews declining to *judge him according to their law. First,* He had said that he should be *delivered to the Gentiles,* and that *they should put him to death* (Matt. xx. 19; Mark x. 33; Luke xviii. 32, 33), and hereby that saying was fulfilled. *Secondly,* He had said that he should be crucified (Matt. xx. 19; xxvi. 2), *lifted up, ch.* iii. 14; xii. 32. Now, if they had *judged him by their law,* he had been stoned; burning, strangling, and beheading, were in some cases used among the Jews, but never crucifying. It was therefore necessary that Christ should be put to death by the Romans, that, being *hanged upon a tree,* he might be *made a curse for us* (Gal. iii. 13), and *his hands and feet* might be *pierced.* As the Roman power had brought him to be born at Bethlehem, so now to die upon a cross, and both according to the scriptures. It is likewise determined concerning us, though not discovered to us, *what death we shall die,* which should free us from all disquieting cares about that matter. "Lord, what, and when, and how thou hast appointed."

II. Here is Pilate's conference with the prisoner, *v.* 33, &c., where we have,

1. The prisoner set to the bar. Pilate, after he had conferred with the chief priests at his door, entered into the hall, and called for Jesus to be brought in. He would not examine him in the crowd, where he might be disturbed by the noise, but ordered him to be brought *into the hall;* for he made no difficulty of going in among the Gentiles. We by sin were become liable to the judgment of God, and were to be brought before his bar; therefore *Christ, being made sin and a curse for us,* was arraigned as a criminal. Pilate entered into judgment with him, that God might not enter into judgment with us.

2. His examination. The other evangelists tell us that his accusers had laid it to his charge that *he perverted the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar,* and upon this he is examined.

(1.) Here is a question put to him, with a design to ensnare him and to find out something upon which to ground an accusation: "*Art thou the king of the Jews?* ὁ βασιλεὺς—*that king of the Jews* who has been so much talked of and so long expected—Messiah the prince, art thou he? Dost thou pretend to be he? Dost thou call thyself, and wouldest thou be thought so?" For he was far from imagining that really he was so, or making a question of that. Some think Pilate asked this with an air of scorn and contempt: "What! *art thou a king,* who makest so mean a figure? *Art thou the king of the Jews,* by whom thou art thus hated and persecuted? *Art thou king de jure—of right,* while the emperor is only king *de facto—in fact?*" Since it could not be proved he ever said it, he would constrain him to say it now, that he might proceed upon his own confession.

(2.) Christ answers this question with another; not for evasion, but as an intimation to Pilate to consider what he did, and upon what grounds he went (*v.* 34): "*Sayest thou this thing of thyself,* from a suspicion arising in thy own breast, *or did others tell it thee of me,* and dost thou ask it only to oblige them?" [1.] "It is plain that thou hast no reason to *say this of thyself.*" Pilate was bound by his office to take care of the interests of the Roman government, but he could not say that this was in any danger, or suffered

any damage, from any thing our Lord Jesus had ever said or done. He never appeared in worldly pomp, never assumed any secular power, never acted as a judge or divider; never were any traitorous principles or practices objected to him, nor any thing that might give the least shadow of suspicion. [2.] "If others *tell it thee of me*, to incense thee against me, thou oughtest to consider who they are, and upon what principles they go, and whether those who represent me as an *enemy to Cæsar* are not really such themselves, and therefore use this only as a pretence to cover their malice, for, if so, the matter ought to be well weighed by a judge that would do justice." Nay, if Pilate had been as inquisitive as he ought to have been in this matter, he would have found that the true reason why the chief priests were outrageous against Jesus was because he did not set up a temporal kingdom in opposition to the Roman power; if he would have done this, and would have wrought miracles to bring the Jews out of the Roman bondage, as Moses did to bring them out of the Egyptian, they would have been so far from siding with the Romans against him that they would have made him their king, and have fought under him against the Romans; but, not answering this expectation of theirs, they charged that upon him of which they were themselves most notoriously guilty—disaffection to and design against the present government; and was such an information as this fit to be countenanced?

(3.) Pilate resents Christ's answer, and takes it very ill, *v.* 35. This is a direct answer to Christ's question, *v.* 34. [1.] Christ had asked him whether he spoke of himself. "No," says he; "*am I a Jew*, that thou suspectest me to be in the plot against thee? I know nothing of the Messiah, nor desire to know, and therefore interest not myself in the dispute who is the Messiah and who not; it is all alike to me." Observe with what disdain Pilate asks, *Am I a Jew?* The Jews were, upon many accounts, an honourable people; but, having corrupted the covenant of their God, *he made them contemptible and base before all the people* (Mal. ii. 8, 9), so that a man of sense and honour reckoned it a scandal to be counted a Jew. Thus good names often suffer for the sake of the bad men that wear them. It is sad that when a Turk is suspected of dishonesty he should ask, "What! do you take me for a Christian?" [2.] Christ had asked him whether others told him. "Yes," says he, "and those *thine own people*, who, one would think, should be biassed in favour of thee, and *the priests*, whose testimony, *in verbum sacerdotis—on the word of a priest*, ought to be regarded; and therefore I have nothing to do but to proceed upon their information." Thus Christ, in his religion, still suffers by those that are of his own nation, even the priests, that profess relation to him, but do not live up to their profession. [3.] Christ had declined answering that question, *Art thou the king of the Jews?* And therefore Pilate puts another question to him more general, "*What hast thou done?* What provocation hast thou given to thy own nation, and particularly the priests, to be so violent against thee? Surely there cannot be all this smoke without some fire, what is it?"

(4.) Christ, in his next reply, gives a more full and direct answer to Pilate's former question, *Art thou a king?* explaining in what sense he was a king, but not such a king as was any ways dangerous to the Roman government, not a secular king, for his interest was not supported by secular methods, *v.* 36. Observe,

[1.] An account of the nature and constitution of Christ's kingdom: It *is not of this world.* It is expressed negatively to rectify the present mistakes concerning it; but the positive is implied, it is *the kingdom of heaven*, and belongs to another world. Christ is a king, and has a kingdom, but *not of this world. First,* Its rise is not from this world; the kingdoms of men arise *out of the sea and the earth* (Dan. vii. 3; Rev. xiii. 1, 11); but *the holy city comes down from God out of heaven*, Rev. xxii. 2. His kingdom is not by succession, election, or conquest, but by the immediate and special designation of the divine will and counsel. *Secondly,* Its nature is not worldly; it is a kingdom within men (Luke xvi. 21), set up in their hearts and consciences (Rom. xiv.17), its riches spiritual, its powers spiritual, and *all its glory within.* The ministers of state in Christ's kingdom have not *the spirit of the world*, 1 Cor. ii. 12. *Thirdly,* Its guards and supports are not worldly; its weapons are spiritual. It neither needed nor used secular force to maintain and advance it, nor was it carried on in a way *hurtful to kings or provinces;* it did not in the least interfere with the prerogatives of princes nor the property of their subjects; it tended not to alter any national establishment in secular things, nor opposed any kingdom but that of sin and Satan. *Fourthly,* Its tendency and design are not worldly. Christ neither aimed nor would allow his disciples to aim at the pomp and power of *the great men of the earth. Fifthly,* Its subjects, though they are in the world, yet *are not of the world;* they *are called and chosen out of the world*, are born from, and bound for, another world; they are neither the world's pupils nor its darlings, neither governed by its wisdom nor enriched with its wealth.

[2.] An evidence of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom produced. If he had designed an opposition to the government, he would have fought them at their own weapons, and would have repelled force with force of the same nature; but he did not take this course: *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I*

should not be delivered to the Jews, and my kingdom be ruined by them. But, *First*, His followers did not offer to fight; there was no uproar, no attempt to rescue him, though the town was now full of Galileans, his friends and countrymen, and they were generally armed; but the peaceable behaviour of his disciples on this occasion was enough *to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Secondly*, He did not order them to fight; nay, he forbade them, which was an evidence both that he did not depend upon worldly aids (for he could have summoned *legions of angels* into his service, which showed that his *kingdom was from above)*, and also that he did not dread worldly opposition, for he was very willing to be *delivered to the Jews*, as knowing that what would have been the destruction of any worldly kingdom would be the advancement and establishment of his; justly therefore does he conclude, *Now* you may see *my kingdom is not from hence;* in the world, but not of it.

(5.) In answer to Pilate's further query, he replies yet more directly, *v.* 37, where we have, [1.] Pilate's plain question: "*Art thou a king then?* Thou speakest of a kingdom thou hast; art thou then, in any sense, a king? And what colour hast thou for such a claim? Explain thyself." [2.] The good confession which our Lord Jesus witnessed before Pontius Pilate, in answer to this (1 Tim. vi. 13): *Thou sayest that I am a king*, that is, It is as thou sayest, I am a king; for *I came to bear witness of the truth. First*, He grants himself to be a king, though not in the sense that Pilate meant. The Messiah was expected under the character of a king, *Messiah the prince;* and therefore, having owned to Caiaphas that he was the Christ, he would not disown to Pilate that he was a king, lest he should seem inconsistent with himself. Note, Though Christ *took upon him the form of a servant*, yet even then he justly claimed the honour and authority of a king. *Secondly*, He explains himself, and shows how he is a king, as *he came to bear witness of the truth;* he rules in the minds of men by the power of truth. If he had meant to declare himself a temporal prince, he would have said, *For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world*, to rule the nations, to conquer kings, and to take possession of kingdoms; no, *he came to be a witness*, a witness for the God that made the world, and against sin that ruins the world, and by this *word of his testimony* he sets up, and keeps up, his kingdom. It was foretold that he should be *a witness to the people*, and, as such, *a leader and commander to the people*, Isa. lv. 4. Christ's kingdom was not of this world, in which *truth faileth* (Isa. lix. 15. *Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare—He that cannot dissemble knows not how to reign)*, but of that world in which truth reigns eternally. Christ's errand into the world, and his business in the world, were *to bear witness to the truth.* 1. To reveal it, to discover to the world that which otherwise could not have been known concerning God and his will and *good-will to men, ch.* i. 18; xvii. 26. 2. To confirm it, Rom. xv. 8. By his miracles *he bore witness to the truth* of religion, the truth of divine revelation, and of God's perfections and providence, and the truth of his promise and covenant, *that all men through him might believe.* Now by doing this he is a king, and sets up a kingdom. (1.) The foundation and power, the spirit and genius, of Christ's kingdom, is truth, divine truth. When he said, *I am the truth*, he said, in effect, I am a king. He conquers by the convincing evidence of truth; he rules by the commanding power of truth, and *in his majesty rides prosperously, because of truth*, Ps. xlv. 4. It is with his truth that he shall judge the people, Ps. xcvi. 13. It is the sceptre of his kingdom; he *draws with the cords of a man*, with truth revealed to us, and received by us in *the love of it;* and thus he *brings thoughts into obedience.* He came *a light into the world*, and rules as the sun by day. (2.) The subjects of this kingdom are those that are *of the truth.* All that by the grace of God are rescued from under the power of *the father of lies*, and are disposed to receive the truth and submit to the power and influence of it, will hear Christ's voice, will become his subjects, and will bear faith and true allegiance to him. Every one that has any real sense of true religion will entertain the Christian religion, and they belong to his kingdom; by the power of truth he makes them willing, Ps. cx. 3. All that are in love with truth will hear the voice of Christ, for greater, better, surer, sweeter truths can nowhere be found than are found in Christ, by whom *grace and truth came;* so that, by *hearing Christ's voice*, we know that we are *of the truth*, 1 John iii. 19.

(6.) Pilate, hereupon, puts a good question to him, but does not stay for an answer, *v.* 38. He said, *What is truth?* and *immediately went out again.*

[1.] It is certain that this was a good question, and could not be put to one that was better able to answer it. Truth is that *pearl of great price* which the human understanding has a desire for and is in quest of; for it cannot rest but in that which is, or at least is apprehended to be, truth. When we *search the scriptures*, and attend the ministry of the word, it must be with this enquiry, *What is truth?* and with this prayer, *Lead me in thy truth, into all truth.* But many put this question that have not patience and constancy enough to persevere in their search after truth, or not humility and sincerity enough to receive it when they have found it, 2 Tim. iii. 7. Thus many deal with their own consciences; they ask them those needful questions, "What am I?" "What have I done?" but will not take time for an answer.

[2.] It is uncertain with what design

Pilate asked this question. *First*, Perhaps he spoke it as a learner, as one that began to think well of Christ, and to look upon him with some respect, and desired to be informed what new notions he advanced and what improvements he pretended to in religion and learning. But while he desired to hear some new truth from him, as Herod to see some miracle, the clamour and outrage of the priests' mob at his gate obliged him abruptly to let fall the discourse. *Secondly*, Some think he spoke it as a judge, enquiring further into the cause now brought before him: "Let me into this mystery, and tell me what the truth of it is, the true state of this matter." *Thirdly*, Others think he spoke it as a scoffer, in a jeering way: "Thou talkest of truth; canst thou tell what truth is, or give me a definition of it?" Thus he makes a jest of the everlasting gospel, that great truth which the chief priests hated and persecuted, and which Christ was now witnessing to and suffering for; and like men of no religion, who take a pleasure in bantering all religions, he ridicules both sides; and therefore Christ made him no reply. *Answer not a fool according to his folly; cast not pearls before swine.* But, though Christ would not tell Pilate what is truth, he has told his disciples, and by them has told us, *ch.* xiv. 6.

III. The result of both these conferences with the prosecutors and the prisoner (*v.* 38—40), in two things:—

1. The judge appeared his friend, and favourable to him, for,

(1.) He publicly declared him innocent, *v.* 38. Upon the whole matter, *I find in him no fault at all.* He supposes there might be some controversy in religion between him and them, wherein he was as likely to be in the right as they; but nothing criminal appears against him. This solemn declaration of Christ's innocency was, [1.] For the justification and honour of the Lord Jesus. By this it appears that though he was treated as the worst of malefactors he had never merited such treatment. [2.] For explaining the design and intention of his death, that he did not die for any sin of his own, even in the judgment of the judge himself, and therefore he died as a sacrifice for our sins, and that, even in the judgment of the prosecutors themselves, *one man should die for the people, ch.* xi. 50. This is he that *did no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth* (Isa. liii. 9), who was to *be cut off, but not for himself*, Dan. ix. 26. [3.] For aggravating the sin of the Jews that prosecuted him with so much violence. If a prisoner has had a fair trial, and has been acquitted by those that are proper judges of the crime, especially if there be no cause to suspect them partial in his favour, he must be believed innocent, and his accusers are bound to acquiesce. But our Lord Jesus, though brought in not guilty, is still run down as a malefactor, and his blood thirsted for.

(2.) He proposed an expedient for his discharge (*v.* 39): *You have a custom, that I should release to you a prisoner at the passover;* shall it be this king of the Jews? He proposed this, not to the chief priests (he knew they would never agree to it), but to the multitude; it was an appeal to the people, as appears, Matt. xxvii. 15. Probably he had heard how this Jesus had been attended but the other day with the hosannas of the common people; he therefore looked upon him to be the darling of the multitude, and the envy only of the rulers, and therefore he made no doubt but they would demand the release of Jesus, and this would stop the mouth of the prosecutors, and all would be well. [1.] He allows their custom, for which, perhaps, they had had a long prescription, in honour of the passover, which was a memorial of their release. But it was adding to God's words, as if he had not instituted enough for the due commemoration of that deliverance, and, though an act of mercy, might be injustice to the public, Prov. xvii. 15. [2.] He offers to release Jesus to them, according to the custom. If Pilate had had the honesty and courage that became a judge, he would not have named an innocent person to be competitor with a notorious criminal for this favour; if he *found no fault in him*, he was bound in conscience to discharge him. But he was willing to trim the matter, and please all sides, being governed more by worldly wisdom than by the rules of equity.

2. The people appeared his enemies, and implacable against him (*v.* 40): *They cried all again* and again, *Not this man*, let not him be released, *but Barabbas.* Observe, (1.) How fierce and outrageous they were. Pilate proposed the thing to them calmly, as worthy their mature consideration, but they resolved it in a heat, and gave in their resolution with clamour and noise, and in the utmost confusion. Note, The enemies of Christ's holy religion cry it down, and so hope to run it down; witness the outcry at Ephesus, Acts xix. 34. But those who think the worse of things or persons merely for their being thus exclaimed against have a very small share of constancy and consideration. Nay, there is cause to suspect a deficiency of reason and justice on that side which calls in the assistance of popular tumult. (2.) How foolish and absurd they were, as is intimated in the short account here given of the other candidate: *Now Barabbas was a robber*, and therefore, [1.] A breaker of the law of God; and yet he shall be spared, rather than one who reproved the pride, avarice, and tyranny of the priests and elders. Though Barabbas be a robber, he will not rob them of Moses's seat, nor of their traditions, and then no matter. [2.] He was an enemy to the public safety and personal property. The clamour of the town is wont to be against robbers (Job xxx. 5, *Men cried after them as after a*

scourged Christ nor crucified him; but, thinking to trim the matter, to please the people by scourging Christ, and save his conscience by not crucifying him, behold he does both; whereas, if he had at first resolved to crucify him, he need not have scourged him. It is common for those who think to keep themselves from greater sins by venturing upon less sins to run into both.

2. That he had done that to him which would make him the less dangerous to them and to their government, *v.* 5. He brought him out to them, wearing the crown of thorns, his head and face all bloody, and said, "*Behold the man* whom you are so jealous of," intimating that though his having been so popular might have given them some cause to fear that his interest in the country would lessen theirs, yet he had taken an effectual course to prevent it, by treating him as a slave, and exposing him to contempt, after which he supposed the people would never look upon him with any respect, nor could he ever retrieve his reputation again. Little did Pilate think with what veneration even these sufferings of Christ would in after ages be commemorated by the best and greatest of men, who would glory in that cross and those stripes which he thought would have been to him and his followers a perpetual and indelible reproach. (1.) Observe here our Lord Jesus shows himself dressed up in all the marks of ignominy. He came forth, willing to be made a spectacle, and to be hooted at, as no doubt he was when he came forth in this garb, knowing that he was set for a *sign that should be spoken against,* Luke ii. 34. Did he go forth thus bearing our reproach? Let us go forth to him *bearing his reproach,* Heb. xiii. 13. (2.) How Pilate shows him: *Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man. He saith unto them:* so the original is; and, the immediate antecedent being *Jesus,* I see no inconvenience in supposing these to be Christ's own words; he said, "*Behold the man* against whom you are so exasperated." But some of the Greek copies, and the generality of the translators, supply it as we do, Pilate saith unto them, with a design to appease them, *Behold the man;* not so much to move their pity, Behold a man worthy your compassion, as to silence their jealousies, Behold a man not worthy your suspicion, a man from whom you can henceforth fear no danger; his crown is *profaned, and cast to the ground,* and now all mankind will make a jest of him. The word however is very affecting: *Behold the man.* It is good for every one of us, with an eye of faith, to behold the man Christ Jesus in his sufferings. *Behold this king with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him,* the crown of thorns, Cant. iii. 11. "Behold him, and be suitably affected with the sight. Behold him, and mourn because of him. Behold him, and love him; be still *looking unto Jesus.*"

III. The prosecutors, instead of being pacified, were but the more exasperated, *v.* 6, 7.

1. Observe here their clamour and outrage. *The chief priests,* who headed the mob, *cried out* with fury and indignation, and their officers, or servants, who must say as they said, joined with them in crying, *Crucify him, crucify him.* The common people perhaps would have acquiesced in Pilate's declaration of his innocency, but their leaders, the priests, *caused them to err.* Now by this it appears that their malice against Christ was, (1.) Unreasonable and most absurd, in that they offer not to make good their charge against him, nor to object against the judgment of Pilate concerning him; but, though he be innocent, he must be crucified. (2.) It was insatiable and very cruel. Neither the extremity of his scourging, nor his patience under it, nor the tender expostulations of the judge, could mollify them in the least; no, nor could the jest into which Pilate had turned the cause, put them into a pleasant humour. (3.) It was violent and exceedingly resolute; they will have it their own way, and hazard the governor's favour, the peace of the city, and their own safety, rather than abate of the utmost of their demands. Were they so violent in running down our Lord Jesus, and in crying, *Crucify him, crucify him?* and shall not we be vigorous and zealous in advancing his name, and in crying, *Crown him, Crown him?* Did their hatred of him sharpen their endeavours against him? and shall not our love to him quicken our endeavours for him and his kingdom?

2. The check Pilate gave to their fury, still insisting upon the prisoner's innocency: "*Take you him and crucify him,* if he must be crucified." This is spoken ironically; he knew they could not, they durst not, crucify him; but it is as if he should say, "You shall not make me a drudge to your malice; I cannot with a safe conscience crucify him." A good resolve, if he would but have stuck to it. He found no fault in him, and therefore should not have continued to parley with the prosecutors. Those that would be safe from sin should be deaf to temptation. Nay, he should have secured the prisoner from their insults. What was he armed with power for, but to protect the injured? The guards of governors ought to be the guards of justice. But Pilate had not courage enough to act according to his conscience; and his cowardice betrayed him into a snare.

3. The further colour which the prosecutors gave to their demand (*v.* 7): *We have a law, and by our law,* if it were but in our power to execute it, *he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.* Now here observe, (1.) They *made their boast of the law,* even when *through breaking the law they dishonoured God,* as is charged upon the Jews, Rom. ii. 23. They had indeed an excellent law, far exceeding the statutes and

judgments of other nations; but in vain did they boast of their law, when they abused it to such bad purposes. (2.) They discover a restless and inveterate malice against our Lord Jesus. When they could not incense Pilate against him by alleging that he pretended himself a king, they urged this, that he pretended himself a God. Thus they turn every stone to take him off. (3.) They pervert the law, and make that the instrument of their malice. Some think they refer to a law made particularly against Christ, as if, being a law, it must be executed, right or wrong; whereas there is a woe to them that *decree unrighteous decrees,* and that *write the grievousness which they have prescribed,* Isa. x. 1. See Mic. vi. 16. But it should seem they rather refer to the law of Moses; and if so, [1.] It was true that blasphemers, idolaters, and false prophets, were to be put to death by that law. Whoever falsely pretended to be the Son of God was guilty of blasphemy, Lev. xxiv. 16. But then, [2.] It was false that Christ pretended to be the Son of God, for he really was so; and they ought to have enquired into the proofs he produced of his being so. If he said that he was the Son of God, and the scope and tendency of his doctrine were not to draw people from God, but to bring them to him, and if he confirmed his mission and doctrine by miracles, as undoubtedly he did, beyond contradiction, by their law they ought to *hearken to him* (Deut. xviii. 18, 19), and, if they did not, they were to be *cut off.* That which was his honour, and might have been their happiness, if they had not stood in their own light, they impute to him as a crime, for which he ought to die; yet if he ought to die by their law he ought not to be crucified, for this was no death inflicted by their law.

IV. The judge brings the prisoner again to his trial, upon this new suggestion. Observe,

1. The concern Pilate was in, when he heard this alleged (*v.* 8): When he heard that his prisoner pretended not to royalty only, but to deity, he was *the more afraid.* This embarrassed him more than ever, and made the case more difficult both ways; for, (1.) There was the more danger of offending the people if he should acquit him, for he knew how jealous that people were for the unity of the Godhead, and what aversion they now had to other gods; and therefore, though he might hope to pacify their rage against a pretended king, he could never reconcile them to a pretended God. "If this be at the bottom of the tumult," thinks Pilate, "it will not be turned off with a jest." (2.) There was the more danger of offending his own conscience if he should condemn him. "Is he one" (thinks Pilate) "that makes himself *the Son of God?* and what if it should prove that he is so? What will become of me then?" Even natural conscience makes men afraid of being found *fighting against God.* The heathen had some fabulous traditions of incarnate deities appearing sometimes in mean circumstances, and treated ill by some that paid dearly for their so doing. Pilate fears lest he should thus run himself into a premunire.

2. His further examination of our Lord Jesus thereupon, *v.* 9. That he might give the prosecutors all the fair play they could desire, he resumed the debate, went into the judgment-hall, and asked Christ, *Whence art thou?* Observe,

(1.) The place he chose for this examination: He *went into the judgment-hall* for privacy, that he might be out of the noise and clamour of the crowd, and might examine the thing the more closely. Those that would find out the truth as it is in Jesus must get out of the noise of prejudice, and retire as it were into the judgment-hall, to converse with Christ alone.

(2.) The question he put to him: *Whence art thou?* Art thou from men or from heaven? From beneath or from above? He had before asked directly, *Art thou a King?* But here he does not directly ask, *Art thou the Son of God?* lest he should seem to meddle with divine things too boldly. But in general, "*Whence art thou?* Where wast thou, and in what world hadst thou a being, before thy coming into this world?"

(3.) The silence of our Lord Jesus when he was examined upon this head; but *Jesus gave him no answer.* This was not a sullen silence, in contempt of the court, nor was it because he knew not what to say; but, [1.] It was a patient silence, that the scripture might be fulfilled, *as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth,* Isa. liii. 7. This silence loudly bespoke his submission to his Father's will in his present sufferings, which he thus accommodated himself to, and composed himself to bear. He was silent, because he would say nothing to hinder his sufferings. If Christ had avowed himself a God as plainly as he avowed himself a king, it is probable that Pilate would not have condemned him (for he was afraid at the mention of it by the prosecutors); and the Romans, though they triumphed over the *kings of the nations* they conquered, yet stood in awe of their gods. See 1 Cor. ii. 8. *If they had known* him to be the *Lord of glory,* they would *not have crucified him;* and how then could we have been saved? [2.] It was a prudent silence. When the chief priests asked him, *Art thou the Son of the Blessed?* he answered, *I am,* for he knew they went upon the scriptures of the Old Testament which spoke of the Messiah; but when Pilate asked him he knew he did not understand his own question, having no notion of the Messiah, and of his being the *Son of God,* and therefore to what purpose should he reply to him whose head was filled with the pagan theology, to which he would have turned his answer?

(4.) The haughty check which Pilate gave him for his silence (*v.* 10): "*Speakest thou not unto me?* Dost thou put such an affront upon me as to stand mute? What *knowest thou not* that, as president of the province, *I have power*, if I think fit, *to crucify thee, and have power*, if I think fit, to *release thee?*" Observe here, [1.] How Pilate magnifies himself, and boasts of his own authority, as not inferior to that of Nebuchadnezzar, of whom it is said that *whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive*, Dan. v. 19. Men in power are apt to be puffed up with their power, and the more absolute and arbitrary it is the more it gratifies and humours their pride. But he magnifies his power to an exorbitant degree when he boasts that he has power to crucify one whom he had declared innocent, for no prince or potentate has authority to do wrong. *Id possumus, quod jure possumus—We can do that only which we can do justly.* [2.] How he tramples upon our blessed Saviour: *Speakest thou not unto me?* He reflects upon him, *First*, As if he were undutiful and disrespectful to those in authority, not speaking when he was spoken to. *Secondly*, As if he were ungrateful to one that had been tender of him: "Speakest thou not to me who have laboured to secure thy release?" *Thirdly*, As if he were unwise for himself: "Wilt thou not speak to clear thyself to one that is willing to clear thee?" If Christ had indeed sought to save his life, now had been his time to have spoken; but that which he had to do was to lay down his life.

(5.) Christ's pertinent answer to this check, *v.* 11, where,

[1.] He boldly rebukes his arrogance, and rectifies his mistake: "Big as thou lookest and talkest, *thou couldest have no power at all against me*, no power to scourge, no power to crucify, *except it were given thee from above.*" Though Christ did not think fit to answer him when he was impertinent (then *answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like him)*, yet he did think fit to answer him when he was imperious; then *answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit*, Prov. xxvi. 4, 5. When Pilate used his power, Christ silently submitted to it; but, when he grew proud of it, he made him know himself: "All the power thou hast is given thee from above," which may be taken two ways:—*First*, As reminding him that his power in general, as a magistrate, was a limited power, and he could do no more than God would suffer him to do. God is the fountain of power; and the *powers that are*, as they are ordained by him and derived from him, so they are subject to him. They ought to go no further than his law directs them; they can go no further than his providence permits them. They are God's hand and his sword, Ps. xvii. 13, 14. Though the axe may *boast itself against him that heweth therewith*, yet still it is but a tool, Isa. x. 5, 15. Let the proud oppressors know that there is *a higher than they*, to whom they are accountable, Eccl. v. 8. And let this silence the murmurings of the oppressed, *It is the Lord.* God has bidden Shimei curse David; and let it comfort them that their persecutors can do no more than God will let them. See Isa. li. 12, 13. *Secondly*, As informing him that his power against him in particular, and all the efforts of that power, were *by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*, Acts ii. 23. Pilate never fancied himself to look so great as now, when he sat in judgment upon such a prisoner as this, who was looked upon by many as the *Son of God* and king of Israel, and had the fate of so great a man at his disposal; but Christ lets him know that he was herein but an instrument in God's hand, and could do nothing against him, but by the appointment of Heaven, Acts iv. 27, 28.

[2.] He mildly excuses and extenuates his sin, in comparison with the sin of the ringleaders: "*Therefore he that delivered me unto thee* lies under greater guilt; for thou as a magistrate hast *power from above*, and art in thy place, thy sin is less than theirs who, from envy and malice, urge thee to abuse thy power."

First, It is plainly intimated that what Pilate did was sin, a great sin, and that the force which the Jews put upon him, and which he put upon himself in it, would not justify him. Christ hereby intended a hint for the awakening of his conscience and the increase of the fear he was now under. The guilt of others will not acquit us, nor will it avail in the great day to say that others were worse than we, for we are not to be judged by comparison, but must *bear our own burden.*

Secondly, Yet theirs that delivered him to Pilate was the greater sin. By this it appears that all sins are not equal, but some more heinous than others; some comparatively as gnats, others as camels; some as motes in the eyes, others as beams; some as pence, others as pounds. *He that delivered Christ to Pilate* was either, 1. The people of the Jews, who cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him.* They had seen Christ's miracles, which Pilate had not; to them the Messiah was first sent; they were his own; and to them, who were now enslaved, a Redeemer should have been most welcome, and therefore it was much worse in them to appear against him than in Pilate. 2. Or rather he means Caiaphas in particular, who was at the head of the conspiracy against Christ, and first advised his death, *ch.* xi. 49, 50. The sin of Caiaphas was abundantly greater than the sin of Pilate. Caiaphas prosecuted Christ from pure enmity to him and his doctrine, deliberately and of malice prepense. Pilate condemned him purely for fear of the people, and it was a hasty resolution which he had not time to cool upon. 3. Some think Christ means Judas; for, though he did not imme-

diately deliver him into the hands of Pilate, yet he betrayed him to those that did. The sin of Judas was, upon many accounts, greater than the sin of Pilate. Pilate was a stranger to Christ; Judas was his friend and follower. Pilate found no fault in him, but Judas knew a great deal of good of him. Pilate, though biassed, was not bribed, but Judas took a *reward against the innocent;* the sin of Judas was a leading sin, and let in all that followed. He was a *guide to them that took Jesus.* So great was the sin of Judas that *vengeance suffered him not to live;* but when Christ said this, or soon after, he was gone *to his own place.*

V. Pilate struggles with the Jews to deliver Jesus out of their hands, but in vain. We hear no more after this of any thing that passed between Pilate and the prisoner; what remains lay between him and the prosecutors.

1. Pilate seems more zealous than before to get Jesus discharged (*v.* 12): *Thenceforth,* from this time, and for this reason, because Christ had given him that answer (*v.* 11), which, though it had a rebuke in it, yet he took kindly; and, though Christ found fault with him, he still continued to find no fault in Christ, but *sought to release him,* desired it, endeavoured it. *He sought to release him;* he contrived how to do it handsomely and safely, and so as not to disoblige the priests. It never does well when our resolutions to do our duty are swallowed up in projects how to do it plausibly and conveniently. If Pilate's policy had not prevailed above his justice, he would not have been long seeking to release him, but would have done it. *Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum—Let justice be done, though heaven itself should fall.*

2. The Jews were more furious than ever, and more violent to get Jesus crucified. Still they carry on their design with noise and clamour as before; so now they cried out. They would have it thought that the commonalty was against him, and therefore laboured to get him cried down by a multitude, and it is no hard matter to pack a mob; whereas, if a fair poll had been granted, I doubt not but it would have been carried by a great majority for the releasing of him. A few madmen may out-shout many wise men, and then fancy themselves to speak the sense (when it is but the nonsense) of a nation, or of all mankind; but it is not so easy a thing to change the sense of the people as it is to misrepresent it, and to change their cry. Now that Christ was in the hands of his enemies his friends were shy and silent, and disappeared, and those that were against him were forward to show themselves so; and this gave the chief priests an opportunity to represent it as the concurring vote of all the Jews that he should be crucified. In this outcry they sought two things:—(1.) To blacken the prisoner as an enemy to Cæsar. He had refused the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, had declared his kingdom not to be of this world, and yet they will have it that he *speaks against Cæsar;* ἀντιλέγει—*he opposes Cæsar,* invades his dignity and sovereignty. It has always been the artifice of the enemies of religion to represent it as hurtful to kings and provinces, when it would be highly beneficial to both. (2.) To frighten the judge, as no friend to Cæsar: "If thou *let this man go* unpunished, and let him go on, *thou art not Cæsar's friend,* and therefore false to thy trust and the duty of thy place, obnoxious to the emperor's displeasure, and liable to be turned out." They intimate a threatening that they would inform against him, and get him displaced; and here they touched him in a sensible and very tender part. But, of all people, these Jews should not have pretended a concern for Cæsar, who were themselves so ill affected to him and his government. They should not talk of being friends to Cæsar, who were themselves such back friends to him; yet thus a pretended zeal for that which is good often serves to cover a real malice against that which is better.

3. When other expedients had been tried in vain, Pilate slightly endeavoured to banter them out of their fury, and yet, in doing this, betrayed himself to them, and yielded to the rapid stream, *v.* 13—15. After he had stood it out a great while, and seemed now as if he would have made a vigorous resistance upon this attack (*v.* 12), he basely surrendered. Observe here,

(1.) What it was that shocked Pilate (*v.* 13): "*When he heard that saying,* that he could not be true to Cæsar's honour, nor sure of Cæsar's favour, if he did not put Jesus to death, then he thought it was time to look about him. All they had said to prove Christ a malefactor, and that therefore it was Pilate's duty to condemn him, did not move him, but he still kept to his conviction of Christ's innocency; but, when they urged that it was his interest to condemn him, then he began to yield. Note, Those that bind up their happiness in the favour of men make themselves an easy prey to the temptations of Satan.

(2.) What preparation was made for a definitive sentence upon this matter: *Pilate brought Jesus forth,* and he himself in great state took the chair. We may suppose that he called for his robes, that he might look big, and then *sat down in the judgment-seat.*

[1.] Christ was condemned with all the ceremony that could be. *First,* To bring us off at God's bar, and that all believers through Christ, being judged here, might be acquitted in the court of heaven. *Secondly,* To take off the terror of pompous trials, which his followers would be brought to for his sake. Paul might the better stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat when his Master had stood there before him

[2.] Notice is here taken of the place and time.

First, The place where Christ was condemned: in a *place called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha*, probably the place where he used to sit to try causes or criminals. Some make *Gabbatha* to signify an *enclosed place*, fenced against the insults of the people, whom therefore he did the less need to fear; others an *elevated place*, raised that all might see him.

Secondly, The time, *v.* 14. It was the preparation of the passover, and *about the sixth hour*. Observe, 1. The day: It was the preparation of the passover, that is, for the passover-sabbath, and the solemnities of that and the rest of the days of the feast of unleavened bread. This is plain from Luke xxiii. 54, *It was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.* So that this preparation was for the sabbath. Note, Before the passover there ought to be preparation. This is mentioned as an aggravation of their sin, in persecuting Christ with so much malice and fury, that it was when they should have been purging out the old leaven, to get ready for the passover; but the better the day the worse the deed. 2. The hour: *It was about the sixth hour.* Some ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts read it about the third hour, which agrees with Mark xv. 25. And it appears by Matt. xxvii. 45 that he was upon the cross before the sixth hour. But it should seem to come in here, not as a precise determination of the time, but as an additional aggravation of the sin of his prosecutors, that they were pushing on the prosecution, not only on a solemn day, the *day of the preparation*, but, from the third to the sixth hour (which was, as we call it, church-time) on that day, they were employed in this wickedness; so that for this day, though they were priests, they dropped the temple-service, for they did not leave Christ till the sixth hour, when the darkness began, which frightened them away. Some think that the sixth hour, with this evangelist, is, according to the Roman reckoning and ours, six of the clock in the morning, answering to the Jews' first hour of the day; this is very probable, that Christ's trial before Pilate was at the height about six in the morning, which was then a little after sun-rising.

(3.) The rencounter Pilate had with the Jews, both priests and people, before he proceeded to give judgment, endeavouring in vain to stem the tide of their rage.

[1.] He saith unto the Jews, *Behold your king.* This is a reproof to them for the absurdity and malice of their insinuating that this Jesus made himself a king: "*Behold your king*, that is, him whom you accuse as a pretender to the crown. Is this a man likely to be dangerous to the government? I am satisfied he is not, and you may be so too, and let him alone." Some think he hereby upbraids them with their secret disaffection to Cæsar: "You would have this man to be your king, if he would but have headed a rebellion against Cæsar." But Pilate, though he was far from meaning so, seems as if he were the voice of God to them. Christ, now crowned with thorns, is, as a king at his coronation, offered to the people: "*Behold your king*, the king whom God hath set upon his holy hill of Zion;" but they, instead of entering into it with acclamations of joyful consent, protest against him; they will not have a king of God's choosing.

[2.] They cried out with the greatest indignation, *Away with him, away with him*, which speaks disdain as well as malice, ἄρον, ἄρον—"*Take him*, he is none of ours; we disown him for our kinsman, much more for our king; we have not only no veneration for him, but no compassion; *away with him* out of our sight;" for so it was written of him, he is one *whom the nation abhors* (Isa. xlix. 7), and they *hid as it were their faces from him*, Isa. liii. 2, 3. *Away with him from the earth*, Acts xxii. 22. This shows, *First*, How we deserved to have been treated at God's tribunal. We were by sin become odious to God's holiness, which cried, *Away with them, away with them*, for God is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*. We were also become obnoxious to God's justice, which cried against us, "*Crucify them, crucify them*, let the sentence of the law be executed." Had not Christ interposed, and been thus rejected of men, we had been for ever rejected of God. *Secondly*, It shows how we ought to treat our sins. We are often in scripture said to crucify sin, in conformity to Christ's death. Now they that crucified Christ did it with detestation. With a pious indignation we should run down sin in us, as they with an impious indignation ran him down who was made sin for us. The true penitent casts away from him his transgressions, *Away with them, away with them* (Isa. ii. 20); xxx. 22), *crucify them, crucify them;* it is not fit that they should live in my soul, Hos. xiv. 8.

[3.] Pilate, willing to have Jesus released, and yet that it should be their doing, asks them, *Shall I crucify your king?* In saying this, he designed either, *First*, To stop their mouths, by showing them how absurd it was for them to reject one who offered himself to them to be their king at a time when they needed one more than ever. Have they no sense of slavery? No desire of liberty? No value for a deliverer? Though he saw no cause to fear him, they might see cause to hope for something from him; since crushed and sinking interests are ready to catch at any thing. Or, *Secondly*, To stop the mouth of his own conscience. "If this Jesus be a king" (thinks Pilate), "he is only king of the Jews, and therefore I have nothing to do but to make a fair tender of him to them; if they refuse him, and will have their king crucified, what is that to me?" He banters them for their folly in expecting a Messiah, and yet running down one that bade so fair to be he.

[4.] The chief priests, that they might effectually renounce Christ, and engage Pilate to crucify him, but otherwise sorely against their will, cried out, *We have no king but Cæsar.* This they knew would please Pilate, and so they hoped to carry their point, though at the same time they hated Cæsar and his government. But observe here, *First,* What a plain indication this is that the time for the Messiah to appear, even the set time, was now come; for, if the Jews have no king but Cæsar, then is the *sceptre departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet,* which should never be till Shiloh come to set up a spiritual kingdom. And, *Secondly,* What a righteous thing it was with God to bring upon them that ruin by the Romans which followed not long after. 1. They adhere to Cæsar, and to Cæsar they shall go. God soon gave them enough of their Cæsars, and, according to Jotham's parable, since the trees choose the bramble for their king, rather than the vine and the olive, an evil spirit is sent among them, for they could not do it truly and sincerely, Judg. ix. 12, 19. Henceforward they were rebels to the Cæsars, and the Cæsars tyrants to them, and their disaffection ended in the overthrow of their place and nation. It is just with God to make that a scourge and plague to us which we prefer before Christ. 2. They would have no other king than Cæsar, and never have they had any other to this day, but have now *abode many days without a king, and without a prince* (Hos. iii. 4), without any of their own, but the kings of the nations have ruled over them; since they will have no king but Cæsar, so shall their doom be, themselves have decided it.

16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led *him* away. 17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: 18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

We have here sentence of death passed upon our Lord Jesus, and execution done soon after. A mighty struggle Pilate had had within him between his convictions and his corruptions; but at length his convictions yielded, and his corruptions prevailed, the fear of man having a greater power over him than the fear of God.

I. *Pilate gave judgment* against Christ, and signed the warrant for his execution, *v.* 16. We may see here, 1. How Pilate sinned against his conscience; he had again and again pronounced him innocent, and yet at last condemned him as guilty. Pilate, since he came to be governor, had in many instances disobliged and exasperated the Jewish nation; for he was a man of a haughty and implacable spirit, and extremely wedded to his humour. He had seized upon the Corban, and spent it upon a water-work; he had brought into Jerusalem shields stamped with Cæsar's image, which was very provoking to the Jews; he had sacrificed the lives of many to his resolutions herein. Fearing therefore that he should be complained of for these and other insolences, he was willing to gratify the Jews. Now this makes the matter much worse. If he had been of an easy, soft, and pliable disposition, his yielding to so strong a stream had been the more excusable; but for a man that was so wilful in other things, and of so fierce a resolution, to be overcome in a thing of this nature, shows him to be a bad man indeed, that could better bear the wronging of his conscience than the crossing of his humour. 2. How he endeavoured to transfer the guilt upon the Jews. He *delivered him,* not to his own officers (as usual), but to the prosecutors, the chief priests and elders; so excusing the wrong to his own conscience with this, that it was but a permissive condemnation, and that he did not put Christ to death, but only connived at those that did it. 3. How Christ was *made sin for us.* We deserved to have been condemned, but Christ was condemned for us, that to us there might be *no condemnation.* God was now entering into judgment with his Son, that he might not enter into judgment with his servants.

II. Judgment was no sooner given than with all possible expedition the prosecutors, having gained their point, resolved to lose no time lest Pilate should change his mind, and order a reprieve (those are enemies to our souls, the worst of enemies, that hurry us to sin, and then leave us no room to undo what we have done amiss), and also lest there should be *an uproar among the people,* and they should find a greater number against them than they had with so much artifice got to be for them. It were well if we would be thus expeditious in that which is good, and not stay for more difficulties.

1. They immediately hurried away the prisoner. The chief priests greedily flew upon the prey which they had been long waiting for; now it is drawn into their net. Or *they,* that is, the soldiers who were to attend the execution, they took him and led him away, not to the place whence he came, and thence to the place of execution, as is usual with us, but directly to the place of execution. Both the priests and the soldiers joined in leading him away. Now was the *Son of man delivered into the hands of men,* wicked and unreasonable men. By the law of Moses (and in appeals by our law) the prosecutors were to be the executioners, Deut. xvii. 7. And the priests here were proud of the office. His being *led away* does not suppose him to have made any opposition, but *the scripture must be ful-*

filled, he was *led as a sheep to the slaughter*, Acts viii. 32. We deserved to have been *led forth with the workers of iniquity* as criminals to execution, Ps. cxxv. 5. But he was led forth for us, that we might escape.

2. To add to his misery, they obliged him, as long as he was able, to carry his cross (*v.* 17), according to the custom among the Romans; hence *Furcifer* was among them a name of reproach. Their crosses did not stand up constantly, as our gibbets do in the places of execution, because the malefactor was nailed to the cross as it lay along upon the ground, and then it was lifted up, and fastened in the earth, and removed when the execution was over, and commonly buried with the body; so that every one that was crucified had a cross of his own. Now Christ's carrying his cross may be considered, (1.) As a part of his sufferings; he endured the cross literally. It was a long and thick piece of timber that was necessary for such a use, and some think it was neither seasoned nor hewn. The blessed body of the Lord Jesus was tender, and unaccustomed to such burdens; it had now lately been harassed and tired out; his shoulders were sore with the stripes they had given him; every jog of the cross would renew his smart, and be apt to strike the thorns he was crowned with into his head; yet all this he patiently underwent, and it was but the *beginning of sorrows*. (2.) As answering the type which went before him; Isaac, when he was to be offered, carried the wood on which he was to be bound and with which he was to be burned. (3.) As very significant of his undertaking, the Father having *laid upon him the iniquity of us all* (Isa. liii. 6), and he having to *take away sin* by *bearing it in his own body upon the tree*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. He had said in effect, *On me be the curse;* for he was made a curse for us, and therefore on him was the cross. (4.) As very instructive to us. Our Master hereby taught all his disciples to take up their cross, and follow him. Whatever cross he calls us out to bear at any time, we must remember that he bore the cross first, and, by bearing it for us, bears it off from us in a great measure, for thus he hath made *his yoke easy, and his burden light*. He bore that end of the cross that had the curse upon it; this was the heavy end; and hence all that are his are enabled to call their afflictions for him *light*, and *but for a moment*.

3. They brought him to the place of execution: He *went forth*, not dragged against his will, but voluntary in his sufferings. He went forth out of the city, for he was *crucified without the gate*, Heb. xiii. 12. And, to put the greater infamy upon his sufferings, he was brought to the common place of execution, as one in all points *numbered among the transgressors*, a place called *Golgotha, the place of a skull*, where they threw dead men's skulls and bones, or where the heads of beheaded malefactors were left,—a place *ceremonially unclean;* there Christ suffered, because he was *made sin for us*, that he might *purge our consciences from dead works*, and the pollution of them. If one would take notice of the traditions of the elders, there are two which are mentioned by many of the ancient writers concerning this place:—(1.) That Adam was buried here, and that this was the place of his skull, and they observe that where death triumphed over the first Adam there the second Adam triumphed over him. Gerhard quotes for this tradition Origen, Cyprian, Epiphanius, Austin, Jerome, and others. (2.) That this was that mountain in the land of Moriah on which Abraham offered up Isaac, and the ram was a ransom for Isaac.

4. There they crucified him, and the other malefactors with him (*v.* 18): *There they crucified him.* Observe, (1.) What death Christ died; the death of the cross, a bloody, painful, shameful death, a cursed death. He was nailed to the cross, as a sacrifice bound to the altar, as a Saviour fixed for his undertaking; his ear nailed to God's door-post, to serve him for ever. He was lifted up as the brazen serpent, hung between heaven and earth because we were unworthy of either, and abandoned by both. His hands were stretched out to invite and embrace us; he hung upon the tree some hours, dying gradually in the full use of reason and speech, that he might actually resign himself a sacrifice. (2.) In what company he died: *Two others with him.* Probably these would not have been executed at that time, but at the request of the chief priests, to add to the disgrace of our Lord Jesus, which might be the reason why one of them reviled him, because their death was hastened for his sake. Had they taken two of his disciples, and crucified them with him, it had been an honour to him; but, if such as they had been partakers with him in suffering, it would have looked as if they had been undertakers with him in satisfaction. Therefore it was ordered that his fellow-sufferers should be the worst of sinners, that he might *bear our reproach*, and that the merit might appear to be his only. This exposed him much to the people's contempt and hatred, who are apt to judge of persons by the lump, and are not curious in distinguishing, and would conclude him not only malefactor because he was yoked with malefactors, but the worst of the three because put in the midst. But thus the scripture was fulfilled, *He was numbered among the transgressors*. He did not die at the altar among the sacrifices, nor mingle his blood with that of bulls and goats; but he died among the criminals, and mingled his blood with theirs who were sacrificed to public justice.

And now let us pause awhile, and with an eye of faith look upon Jesus. Was ever sorrow like unto his sorrow? See him who was clothed with glory stripped of it all, and clothed with shame—him who was the *praise of angels* made a *reproach of men*—him who

had been with eternal delight and joy in the bosom of his Father now in the extremities of pain and agony. See him bleeding, see him struggling, see him dying, see him and love him, love him and live to him, and study what we shall render.

19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin. 21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. 22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. 23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. 24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. 25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*. 28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. 29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth. 30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Here are some remarkable circumstances of Christ's dying more fully related than before, which those will take special notice of who covet to know Christ and him crucified.

I. The title set up over his head. Observe,

1. The inscription itself which Pilate wrote, and ordered to be fixed to the top of the cross, declaring the cause for which he was crucified, *v.* 19. Matthew called it, *αἰτία—the accusation;* Mark and Luke called it, *ἐπιγραφὴ—the inscription;* John calls it by the proper Latin name, *τίτλος—the title:* and it was this, *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.* Pilate intended this for his reproach, that he, being *Jesus of Nazareth,* should pretend to be king of the Jews, and set up in competition with Cæsar, to whom Pilate would thus recommend himself, as very jealous for his honour and interest, when he would treat but a titular king, a king in metaphor, as the worst of malefactors; but God overruled this matter, (1.) That it might be a further testimony to the innocency of our Lord Jesus; for here was an accusation which, as it was worded, contained no crime. If this be all they have to lay to his charge, surely he has done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. (2.) That it might show forth his dignity and honour. This is Jesus a Saviour, *Ναζωραῖος,* the blessed Nazarite, sanctified to God; this is the *king of the Jews, Messiah the prince,* the *sceptre* that *should rise out of Israel,* as Balaam had foretold; dying for the good of his people, as Caiaphas had foretold. Thus all these three bad men witnessed to Christ, though they meant not so.

2. The notice taken of this inscription (*v.* 20): *Many of the Jews read it,* not only those of Jerusalem, but those out of the country, and from other countries, strangers and proselytes, that came up to worship at the feast. Multitudes read it, and it occasioned a great variety of reflections and speculations, as men stood affected. Christ himself was set for a sign, a title. Here are two reasons why the title was so much read:—(1.) Because the place where Jesus was crucified, though without the gate, was yet *nigh the city,* which intimates that if it had been any great distance off they would not have been led, no not by their curiosity, to go and see it, and read it. It is an advantage to have the means of knowing Christ brought to our doors. (2.) Because it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, which made it legible by all; they all understood one or other of these languages, and none were more careful to bring up their children to read than the Jews generally were. It likewise made it the more considerable; every one would be curious to enquire what it was which was so industriously published in the three most known languages. In the Hebrew the oracles of God were recorded; in Greek the learning of the philosophers; and in Latin the laws of the empire. In each of

these Christ is proclaimed king, in whom are hid all the treasures of revelation, wisdom, and power. God so ordering it that this should be written in the three then most known tongues, it was intimated thereby that Jesus Christ should be a Saviour to all nations, and not to the Jews only; and also that every nation should hear *in their own tongue the wonderful works* of the Redeemer. Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, were the vulgar languages at that time in this part of the world; so that this is so far from intimating (as the Papists would have it) that the scripture is still to be retained in these three languages, that on the contrary it teaches us that the knowledge of Christ ought to be diffused throughout every nation in their own tongue, as the proper vehicle of it, that people may converse as freely with the scriptures as they do with their neighbours.

3. The offence which the prosecutors took at it, *v.* 21. They would not have it written, *the king of the Jews;* but that he said of himself, *I am the king of the Jews.* Here they show themselves, (1.) Very spiteful and malicious against Christ. It was not enough to have him crucified, but they must have his name crucified too. To justify themselves in giving him such bad treatment, they thought themselves concerned to give him a bad character, and to represent him as a usurper of honours and powers that he was not entitled to. (2.) Foolishly jealous of the honour of their nation. Though they were a conquered and enslaved people, yet they stood so much upon the punctilio of their reputation that they scorned to have it said that this was their king. (3.) Very impertinent and troublesome to Pilate. They could not but be sensible that they had forced him, against his mind, to condemn Christ, and yet, in such a trivial thing as this, they continue to tease him; and it was so much the worse in that, though they had charged him with pretending to be the king of the Jews, yet they had not proved it, nor had he ever said so.

4. The judge's resolution to adhere to it: "*What I have written I have written,* and will not alter it to humour them."

(1.) Hereby an affront was put upon the chief priests, who would still be dictating. It seems, by Pilate's manner of speaking, that he was uneasy in himself for yielding to them, and vexed at them for forcing him to it, and therefore he was resolved to be cross with them; and by this inscription he insinuates, [1.] That, notwithstanding their pretences, they were not sincere in their affections to Cæsar and his government; they were willing enough to have a king of the Jews, if they could have one to their mind. [2.] That such a king as this, so mean and despicable, was good enough to be the king of the Jews; and this would be the fate of all that should dare to oppose the Roman power. [3.] That they had been very unjust and unreasonable in prosecuting this Jesus, when there was no fault to be found in him.

(2.) Hereby honour was done to the Lord Jesus. Pilate stuck to it with resolution, that he was the king of the Jews. What he had written was what God had first written, and therefore he could not alter it; for thus it was written, that Messiah the prince should be *cut off,* Dan. ix. 26. This therefore is the true cause of his death; he dies because the king of Israel must die, must thus die. When the Jews reject Christ, and will not have him for their king, Pilate, a Gentile, sticks to it that he is a king, which was an earnest of what came to pass soon after, when the Gentiles submitted to the kingdom of the Messiah, which the unbelieving Jews had rebelled against.

II. The dividing of his garments among the executioners, *v.* 23, 24. Four soldiers were employed, who, *when they had crucified Jesus,* had nailed him to the cross, and lifted it up, and him upon it, and nothing more was to be done than to wait his expiring through the extremity of pain, as, with us, when the prisoner is turned off, then they went to make a dividend of his clothes, each claiming an equal share, and so they *made four parts,* as nearly of the same value as they could, *to every soldier a part;* but *his coat,* or upper garment whether cloak or gown, being a pretty piece of curiosity, *without seam, woven from the top throughout,* they agreed to *cast lots for it.* Here observe, 1. The shame they put upon our Lord Jesus, in stripping him of his garments before they crucified him. The shame of nakedness came in with sin. He therefore who was made sin for us bore that shame, to roll away our reproach. He was stripped, that we might be clothed with *white raiment* (Rev. iii. 18), and that when we are unclothed *we may not be found naked.* 2. The wages with which these soldiers paid themselves for crucifying Christ. They were willing to do it for his old clothes. Nothing is to be done so bad, but there will be found men bad enough to do it for a trifle. Probably they hoped to make more than ordinary advantage of his clothes, having heard of cures wrought by the touch of the hem of his garment, or expecting that his admirers would give any money for them. 3. The sport they made about his seamless coat. We read not of any thing about him valuable or remarkable but this, and this not for the richness, but only the variety of it, for it was *woven from the top throughout;* there was no curiosity therefore in the shape, but a designed plainness. Tradition says, his mother wove it for him, and adds this further, that it was made for him when he was a child, and, like the Israelites' clothes in the wilderness, *waxed not old;* but this is a groundless fancy. The soldiers thought it a pity to rend it, for then it would unravel, and a piece of it would be good for nothing; they would *therefore cast lots for it.* While Christ was

in his dying agonies, they were merrily dividing his spoils. The preserving of Christ's seamless coat is commonly alluded to to show the care all Christians ought to take that they rend not the church of Christ with strifes and divisions; yet some have observed that the reason why the soldiers would not rend Christ's coat was not out of any respect to Christ, but because each of them hoped to have it entire for himself. And so many cry out against schism, only that they may engross all the wealth and power to themselves. Those who opposed Luther's separation from the church of Rome urged much the *tunica inconsutilis—the seamless coat;* and some of them laid so much stress upon it that they were called the *Inconsutilistæ—The seamless.* 4. The fulfilling of the scripture in this. David, in spirit, foretold this very circumstance of Christ's sufferings, in that passage, Ps. xxii. 18. The event so exactly answering the prediction proves, (1.) That *the scripture* is the word of God, which foretold contingent events concerning Christ so long before, and they came to pass according to the prediction. (2.) That Jesus is the true Messiah; for in him all the Old-Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah had, and have, their full accomplishment. *These things therefore the soldiers did.*

III. The care that he took of his poor mother.

1. His mother attends him to his death (*v.* 25): *There stood by the cross,* as near as they could get. *his mother,* and some of his relations and friends with her. At first, they stood near, as it is said here; but afterwards, it is probable, the soldiers forced them to stand afar off, as it is said in Matthew and Mark: or they themselves removed out of the ground. (1.) See here the tender affection of these pious women to our Lord Jesus in his sufferings. When all his disciples, except John, had forsaken him, they continued their attendance on him. Thus *the feeble were as David* (Zech. xii. 8): they were not deterred by the fury of the enemy nor the horror of the sight; they could not rescue him nor relieve him, yet they attended him, to show their good-will. It is an impious and blasphemous construction which some of the popish writers put upon the virgin Mary standing by the cross, that thereby she contributed to the satisfaction he made for sin no less than he did, and so became a joint-mediatrix and co-adjutrix in our salvation. (2.) We may easily suppose what an affliction it was to these poor women to see him thus abused, especially to the blessed virgin. Now was fulfilled Simeon's word, *A sword shall pierce through thy own soul,* Luke ii. 35. His torments were her tortures; she was upon the rack, while he was upon the cross; and her heart bled with his wounds; and *the reproaches wherewith they reproached* him fell on those that attended him. (3.) We may justly admire the power of divine grace in supporting these women, especially the virgin Mary, under this heavy trial. We do not find his mother wringing her hands, or tearing her hair, or rending her clothes, or making an outcry; but, with a wonderful composure, *standing by the cross,* and her friends with her. Surely she and they were strengthened by a divine power to this degree of patience; and surely the virgin Mary had a fuller expectation of his resurrection than the rest had, which supported her thus. We know not what we can bear till we are tried, and then we know who has said, *My grace is sufficient for thee.*

2. He tenderly provides for his mother at his death. It is probable that Joseph, her husband, was long since dead, and that her son Jesus had supported her, and her relation to him had been her maintenance; and now that he was dying what would become of her? He saw her standing by, and knew her cares and griefs; and he saw John standing not far off, and so he settled a new relation between his beloved mother and his beloved disciple; for he said to her, "*Woman, behold thy son,* for whom henceforward thou must have a motherly affection;" and to him, "*Behold thy mother,* to whom thou must pay a filial duty." And so *from that hour,* that hour never to be forgotten, *that disciple took her to his own home.* See here,

(1.) The care Christ took of his dear mother. He was not so much taken up with a sense of his sufferings as to forget his friends, all whose concerns he bore upon his heart. His mother, perhaps, was so taken up with his sufferings that she thought not of what would become of her; but he admitted that thought. *Silver and gold he had none* to leave, no estate, real or personal; his clothes the soldiers had seized, and we hear no more of the bag since Judas, who had carried it, hanged himself. He had therefore no other way to provide for his mother than by his interest in a friend, which he does here. [1.] He calls her *woman,* not mother, not out of any disrespect to her, but because mother would have been a cutting word to her that was already wounded to the heart with grief; like Isaac saying to Abraham, *My father.* He speaks as one that was *now no more in this world,* but was already dead to those in it that were dearest to him. His speaking in this seemingly slight manner to his mother, as he had done formerly, was designed to obviate and give a check to the undue honours which he foresaw would be given to her in the Romish church, as if she were a joint purchaser with him in the honours of the Redeemer. [2.] He directs her to look upon John as her son: "Behold him as thy son, who stands there by thee, and be as a mother to him." See here, *First,* An instance of divine goodness, to be observed for our encouragement. Sometimes, when God removes one comfort from us, he raises up another for us, perhaps where we looked not for it. We read of children which the church

shall have after she has lost the other, Isa. xlix. 21. Let none therefore reckon all gone with one cistern dried up, for from the same fountain another may be filled. *Secondly*, An instance of filial duty, to be observed for our imitation. Christ has here taught children to provide, to the utmost of their power, for the comfort of their aged parents. When David was in distress, he took care of his parents, and found out a shelter for them (1 Sam. xxii. 3); so the Son of David here. Children at their death, according to their ability, should provide for their parents, if they survive them, and need their kindness.

(2.) The confidence he reposed in the beloved disciple. It is to him he says, *Behold thy mother*, that is, I recommend her to thy care, be thou as a son to her to guide her (Isa. li. 18); and *forsake her not when she is old*, Prov. xxiii. 22. Now, [1.] This was an honour put upon John, and a testimony both to his prudence and to his fidelity. If he who knows all things had not known that John loved him, he would not have made him his mother's guardian. It is a great honour to be employed for Christ, and to be entrusted with any of his interest in the world. But, [2.] It would be a care and some charge to John; but he cheerfully accepted it, *and took her to his own home*, not objecting the trouble nor expense, nor his obligations to his own family, nor the ill-will he might contract by it. Note, Those that truly love Christ, and are beloved of him, will be glad of an opportunity to do any service to him or his. *Nicephoras's Eccl. Hist. lib.* ii. *cap.* 3, saith that the virgin Mary lived with John at Jerusalem eleven years, and then died. Others, that she lived to remove with him to Ephesus.

IV. The fulfilling of the scripture, in the giving of him vinegar to drink, *v.* 28, 29. Observe,

1. How much respect Christ showed to the scripture (*v.* 28): *Knowing that all things* hitherto *were accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled*, which spoke of his drinking in his sufferings, *he saith, I thirst*, that is, he called for drink.

(1.) It was not at all strange that he was thirsty; we find him *thirsty* in a journey (*ch.* iv. 6, 7), and now thirsty when he was just at his journey's end. Well might he thirst after all the toil and hurry which he had undergone, and being now in the agonies of death, ready to expire purely by the loss of blood and extremity of pain. The torments of hell are represented by a violent thirst in the complaint of the rich man that begged for a *drop of water to cool his tongue*. To that everlasting thirst we had been condemned, had not Christ suffered for us.

(2.) But the reason of his complaining of it is somewhat surprising; it is the only word he spoke that looked like complaint of his outward sufferings. When they scourged him, and crowned him with thorns, he did not cry, O my head! or, My back! But now he cried, *I thirst*. For, [1.] He would thus express *the travail of his soul*, Isa. liii. 11. He thirsted after the glorifying of God, and the accomplishment of the work of our redemption, and the happy issue of his undertaking. [2.] He would thus take care to see the scripture fulfilled. Hitherto, all had been accomplished, and he knew it, for this was the thing he had carefully observed all along; and now he called to mind one thing more, which this was the proper season for the performance of. By this it appears that he was the Messiah, in that not only the scripture was punctually fulfilled in him, but it was strictly eyed by him. By this it appears *that God was with him of a truth*—that in all he did he went exactly according to the word of God, taking care *not to destroy, but to fulfil, the law and the prophets*. Now, *First*, The scripture had foretold his thirst, and therefore he himself related it, because it could not otherwise be known, saying, *I thirst;* it was foretold that his tongue should cleave to his jaws, Ps. xxii. 15. Samson, an eminent type of Christ, when he was laying *the Philistines heaps upon heaps*, was himself *sore athirst* (Judg. xv. 18); so was Christ, when he was upon the cross, *spoiling principalities and powers*. *Secondly*, The scripture had foretold that in his thirst he should have vinegar given him to drink, Ps. lxix. 21. They had given him vinegar to drink before they crucified him (Matt. xxvii. 34), but the prophecy was not exactly fulfilled in that, because that was not in his thirst; therefore now he said, *I thirst*, and called for it again: then he would not drink, but now he received it Christ would rather court an affront than see any prophecy unfulfilled. This should satisfy us under all our trials, that the will of God is done, and the word of God accomplished.

2. See how little respect his persecutors showed to him (*v.* 29): *There was set a vessel full of vinegar*, probably according to the custom at all executions of this nature; or, as others think, it was now set designedly for an abuse to Christ, instead of the cup of wine which they used to give *to those that were ready to perish;* with this *they filled a sponge*, for they would not allow him a cup, *and they put it upon hyssop*, a hyssop-stalk, and with this heaved it to his mouth; ὑσσώπῳ περιθέντες—*they stuck it round with hyssop;* so it may be taken; or, as others, they mingled it with hyssop-water, and this they gave him to drink when he was thirsty; a drop of water would have cooled his tongue better than a draught of vinegar: yet this he submitted to for us. *We had taken the sour grapes*, and *thus his teeth were set on edge;* we had forfeited all comforts and refreshments, and therefore they were withheld from him. When heaven denied him a beam of light earth denied him a drop of water, and put vinegar in the room of it.

V. The dying word wherewith he breathed

out his soul (*v.* 30): *When he had received the vinegar,* as much of it as he thought fit, *he said, It is finished;* and, with that, *bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* Observe,

1. What he said, and we may suppose him to say it with triumph and exultation, Τετέλεσται —*It is finished,* a comprehensive word, and a comfortable one. (1.) *It is finished,* that is, the malice and enmity of his persecutors had now done their worst; *when he had received* that last indignity in *the vinegar they gave him, he said,* "This is the last; I am now going out of their reach, *where the wicked cease from troubling.*" (2.) *It is finished,* that is, the counsel and commandment of his Father concerning his sufferings were now fulfilled; it was a *determinate counsel,* and he took care to see every iota and tittle of it exactly answered, Acts ii. 23. He had said, when he entered upon his sufferings, *Father, thy will be done;* and now he saith with pleasure, *It is done.* It was *his meat and drink to finish his work* (*ch.* iv. 34), and the meat and drink refreshed him, when they gave him gall and vinegar. (3.) *It is finished,* that is, all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, which pointed at the sufferings of the Messiah, were accomplished and answered. He speaks as if, now that *they had given him the vinegar,* he could not bethink himself of any word in the Old Testament that was to be fulfilled between him and his death but it had its accomplishment; such as, his being *sold for thirty pieces of silver, his hands and feet being pierced, his garments divided,* &c.; and now that this is done, *It is finished.* (4.) *It is finished,* that is, the ceremonial law is abolished, and a period put to the obligation of it. The substance is now come, and all the shadows are done away. Just now *the veil is rent, the wall of partition is taken down,* even *the law of commandments contained in ordinances,* Eph. ii. 14, 15. The Mosaic economy is dissolved, *to make way for a better hope.* (5.) *It is finished,* that is, sin is finished, and an end made of transgression, by *the bringing in of an everlasting righteousness.* It seems to refer to Dan. ix. 24. *The Lamb of God was sacrificed to take away the sin of the world,* and it is done, Heb. ix. 26. (6.) *It is finished,* that is, his sufferings were now finished, both those of his soul and those of his body. The storm is over, the worst is past; all his pains and agonies are at an end, and he is just going to paradise, entering upon *the joy set before him.* Let all that *suffer for Christ,* and with Christ, comfort themselves with this, *that yet a little while* and they also shall say, *It is finished.* (7.) *It is finished,* that is, his life was now finished, he was just ready to breathe his last, and *now he is no more in this world, ch.* xvii. 11. This is like that of blessed Paul (2 Tim. iv. 7), *I have finished my course,* my race is run, my glass is out, *mene, mene—numbered* and *finished.* This we must all come to shortly. (8.) *It is finished,* that is, the work of man's redemption and salvation is now completed, at least the hardest part of the undertaking is over; a full satisfaction is made to the justice of God, a fatal blow given to the power of Satan, a fountain of grace opened that shall ever flow, a foundation of peace and happiness laid that shall never fail. Christ had now gone through with his work, and *finished it,* ch. xvii. 4. For, *as for God, his work is perfect; when I begin,* saith he, *I will also make an end.* And, as in the purchase, so in the application of the redemption, *he that has begun a good work will perform it;* the mystery of God shall be finished.

2. What he did: *He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* He was voluntary in dying; for he was not only the sacrifice, but the priest and the offerer; and the *animus offerentis—the mind of the offerer,* was all in all in the sacrifice. Christ showed his will in his sufferings, *by which will we are sanctified.* (1.) *He gave up the ghost.* His life was not forcibly extorted from him, but freely resigned. He had said, *Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit,* thereby expressing the intention of this act. I give up myself as a *ransom for many;* and, accordingly, he did give up his spirit, paid down the price of pardon and life at his Father's hands. *Father, glorify thy name.* (2.) *He bowed his head.* Those that were crucified, in dying stretched up their heads to gasp for breath, and did not drop their heads till they had breathed their last; but Christ, to show himself active in dying, *bowed his head* first, composing himself, as it were, to fall asleep. God *had laid upon him the iniquity of us all,* putting it upon the head of this great sacrifice; and some think that by this bowing of his head he would intimate his sense of the weight upon him. See Ps. xxxviii. 4; xl. 12. The bowing of his head shows his submission to his Father's will, and his obedience to death. He accommodated himself to his dying work, as Jacob, *who gathered up his feet into the bed, and then yielded up the ghost.*

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day (for that sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. 32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. 35 And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true;

and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. 36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. 37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

This passage concerning the piercing of Christ's side after his death is recorded only by this evangelist.

I. Observe the superstition of the Jews, which occasioned it (*v.* 31): *Because it was the preparation for the sabbath, and that sabbath day*, because it fell in the passover-week, *was a high day*, that they might show a veneration for the sabbath, they would *not have the dead bodies to remain on the crosses on the sabbath-day*, but *besought Pilate that their legs might be broken*, which would be a certain, but cruel dispatch, and that then they might be buried out of sight. Note here, 1. The esteem they would be thought to have for the approaching sabbath, because it was one of the days of unleavened bread, and (some reckon) the day of the offering of the first-fruits. Every sabbath day is a holy day, and a good day, but this was a high day, μέγαλη ἡμερα—*a great day*. Passover sabbaths are high days; sacrament-days, supper-days, communion-days are high days, and there ought to be more than ordinary preparation for them, that these may be high days indeed to us, *as the days of heaven*. 2. The reproach which they reckoned it would be to that day if the dead bodies should be left hanging on the crosses. Dead bodies were not to be left at any time (Deut. xxi. 23); yet, in this case, the Jews would have left the Roman custom to take place, had it not been an extraordinary day; and, many strangers from all parts being then at Jerusalem, it would have been an offence to them; nor could they well bear the sight of Christ's crucified body, for, unless their consciences were quite seared, when the heat of their rage was a little over, they would upbraid them. 3. Their petition to Pilate, that their bodies, now as good as dead, might be dispatched; not by strangling or beheading them, which would have been a compassionate hastening of them out of their misery, like the *coup de grace* (as the French call it) to those that are broken upon the wheel, *the stroke of mercy*, but by the breaking of their legs, which would carry them off in the most exquisite pain. Note, (1.) *The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.* (2.) The pretended sanctity of hypocrites is abominable. These Jews would be thought to bear a great regard for the sabbath, and yet had no regard to justice and righteousness; they made no conscience of bringing an innocent and excellent person to the cross, and yet scrupled letting a dead body hang upon the cross.

II. The dispatching of *the two thieves that were crucified with him*, *v.* 32. Pilate was still gratifying the Jews, and gave orders as they desired; *and the soldiers came*, hardened against all impressions of pity, *and broke the legs of the two thieves*, which, no doubt, extorted from them hideous outcries, and made them die according to the bloody disposition of Nero, so as to feel themselves die. One of these thieves was a penitent, and had received from Christ an assurance that he should shortly be with him in paradise, and yet died in the same pain and misery that the other thief did; for *all things come alike to all.* Many go to heaven that *have bands in their death*, and *die in the bitterness of their soul.* The extremity of dying agonies is no obstruction to the living comforts that wait for holy souls on the other side death. Christ died, and went to paradise, but appointed a guard to convey him thither. This is the order of going to heaven—*Christ, the first-fruits* and forerunner, *afterwards those that are Christ's.*

III. The trial that was made whether Christ was dead or no, and the putting of it out of doubt.

1. They supposed him to be dead, and therefore *did not break his legs*, *v.* 33. Observe here, (1.) That Jesus died in less time than persons crucified ordinarily did. The structure of his body, perhaps, being extraordinarily fine and tender, was the sooner broken by pain; or, rather, it was to show that he laid down his life of himself, and could die when he pleased, though his hands were nailed. Though he yielded to death, yet he was not conquered. (2.) That his enemies were satisfied he was really dead. The Jews, who stood by to see the execution effectually done, would not have omitted this piece of cruelty, if they had not been sure he was got out of the reach of it. (3.) *Whatever devices are in men's hearts, the counsel of the Lord shall stand.* It was fully designed to break his legs, but, God's counsel being otherwise, see how it was prevented.

2. Because they would be sure he was dead they made such an experiment as would put it past dispute. *One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side*, aiming at his heart, *and forthwith came thereout blood and water*, *v.* 34.

(1.) The soldier hereby designed to decide the question whether he was dead or no, and by this honourable wound in his side to supersede the ignominious method of dispatch they took with the other two. Tradition says that this soldier's name was *Longinus*, and that, having some distemper in his eyes, he was immediately cured of it, by some drops of blood that flowed out of Christ's side falling on them: significant enough, if we had any good authority for the story.

(2.) But God had a further design herein, which was,

[1.] To give an evidence of the truth of his death, in order to the proof of his resurrection. If he was only in a trance or swoon, his resurrection was a sham; but, by this ex-

periment, he was certainly dead, for this spear broke up the very fountains of life, and, according to all the law and course of nature, it was impossible a human body should survive such a wound as this in the vitals, and such an evacuation thence.

[2.] To give an illustration of the design of his death. There was much of mystery in it, and its being so solemnly attested (*v.* 35) intimates there was something miraculous in it, that *the blood and water* should come out distinct and separate from the same wound; at least it was very significant; this same apostle refers to it as a very considerable thing, 1 John v. 6, 8.

First, the opening of his side was significant. When we would protest our sincerity, we wish there were a window in our hearts, that the thoughts and intents of them might be visible to all. Through this window, opened in Christ's side, you may look into his heart, and see love flaming there, love strong as death; see our names written there. Some make it an allusion to the opening of Adam's side in innocency. When Christ, the second Adam, was fallen into a deep sleep upon the cross, then was his side opened, and out of it was his church taken, which he espoused to himself. See Eph. v. 30, 32. Our devout poet, Mr. George Herbert, in his poem called *The Bag*, very affectingly brings in our Saviour, when his side was pierced, thus speaking to his disciples:—

> If ye have any thing to send, or write
> (I have no bag, but here is room),
> Unto my Father's hands and sight
> (Believe me) it shall safely come.
> That I shall mind what you impart,
> Look, you may put it very near my heart;
> Or, if hereafter any of my friends
> Will use me in this kind, the door
> Shall still be open; what he sends
> I will present, and somewhat more,
> Not to his hurt. Sighs will convey
> Any thing to me. Hark, Despair, away.

Secondly, *The blood and water* that flowed out of it were significant. 1. They signified the two great benefits which all believers partake of through Christ — justification and sanctification; blood for remission, water for regeneration; blood for atonement, water for purification. Blood and water were used very much under the law. Guilt contracted must be expiated by blood; stains contracted must be done away by *the water of purification.* These two must always go together. *You are sanctified, you are justified,* 1 Cor. vi. 11. Christ has joined them together, and we must not think to put them asunder. They both flowed from the pierced side of our Redeemer. To Christ crucified we owe both merit for our justification, and Spirit and grace for our sanctification; and we have as much need of the latter as of the former, 1 Cor. i. 30. 2. They signified the two great ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, by which those benefits are represented, sealed, and applied, to believers; they both owe their institution and efficacy to Christ. It is not the water in the font that will be to us *the washing of regeneration,* but the water out of the side of Christ; not the blood of the grape that will pacify the conscience and refresh the soul, but the blood out of the side of Christ. Now was the rock smitten (1 Cor. x. 4), now was the fountain opened (Zech. xiii. 1), now were the wells of salvation digged, Isa. xii. 3. Here *is the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God.*

IV. The attestation of the truth of this by an eye-witness (*v.* 35), the evangelist himself. Observe,

1. What a competent witness he was of the matters of fact. (1.) What he bore record of he saw; he had it not by hearsay, nor was it only his own conjecture, but he was an eye-witness of it; it is *what we have seen and looked upon* (1 John i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 16), and *had perfect understanding of,* Luke i. 3. (2.) What he saw he faithfully bore record of; as a faithful witness, he told not only the truth, but the whole truth; and did not only attest it by word of mouth, but left it upon record in writing, *in perpetuam rei memoriam — for a perpetual memorial.* (3.) *His record is* undoubtedly *true;* for he wrote not only from his own personal knowledge and observation, but from the dictates of the Spirit of truth, that leads into all truth. (4.) He had himself a full assurance of the truth of what he wrote, and did not persuade others to believe that which he did not believe himself: *He knows that he saith true.* (5.) He *therefore* witnessed these things, *that we might believe;* he did not record them merely for his own satisfaction or the private use of his friends, but made them public to the world; not to please the curious nor entertain the ingenious, but to draw men to believe the gospel in order to their eternal welfare.

2. What care he showed in this particular instance. That we may be well assured of the truth of Christ's death, he saw his heart's blood, his life's blood, let out; and also of the benefits that flow to us from his death, signified by the blood and water which came out of his side. Let this silence the fears of weak Christians, and encourage their hopes, *iniquity shall not be their ruin,* for there came both water and blood out of Christ's pierced side, both to justify and sanctify them; and if you ask, How can we be sure of this? You may be sure, for *he that saw it bore record.*

V. The accomplishment of the scripture in all this (*v.* 36): *That the scripture might be fulfilled,* and so both the honour of the Old Testament preserved and the truth of the New Testament confirmed. Here are two instances of it together:—

1. The scripture was fulfilled in the preserving of his legs from being broken; therein that word was fulfilled, *A bone of him shall not be broken.* (1.) There was a promise of this made indeed to all *the righteous,* but principally pointing at *Jesus Christ the righteous* (Ps. xxxiv. 20): *He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.* And David,

in spirit, says, *All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?* Ps. xxxv. 10. (2.) There was a type of this in the paschal lamb, which seems to be especially referred to here (Exod. xii. 46): *Neither shall you break a bone thereof;* and it is repeated (Num. ix. 12), *You shall not break any bone of it;* for which law the will of the law-maker is the reason, but the antitype must answer the type. *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*, 1 Cor. v. 7. He is *the Lamb of God* (*ch.* i. 29), and, as the true passover, his bones were kept unbroken. This commandment was given concerning his bones, when dead, as of Joseph's, Heb. xi. 22. (3.) There was a significancy in it; the strength of the body is in the bones. The Hebrew word for the bones signifies the strength, and therefore *not a bone of Christ must be broken*, to show that though *he be crucified in weakness* his strength to save is not at all broken. Sin breaks our bones, as it broke David's (Ps. li. 8); but it did not break Christ's bones; he stood firm under the burden, mighty to save.

2. *The scripture was fulfilled* in *the piercing of his side* (*v.* 37): *They shall look on me whom they had pierced;* so it is written, Zech. xii. 10. And there the same that pours out the Spirit of grace, and can be no less than the God of the holy prophets, says, *They shall look upon me*, which is here applied to Christ, *They shall look upon him.* (1.) It is here implied that the Messiah shall be pierced; and here it had a more full accomplishment than in *the piercing of his hands and feet;* he was pierced by *the house of David* and *the inhabitants of Jerusalem, wounded in the house of his friends*, as it follows, Zech. xiii. 6. (2.) It is promised that *when the Spirit is poured out they shall look on him and mourn.* This was in part fulfilled when many of those that were his betrayers and murderers *were pricked to the heart*, and brought to believe in him; it will be further fulfilled, in mercy, *when all Israel shall be saved;* and, in wrath, when those who persisted in their infidelity shall *see him whom they have pierced, and wail because of him*, Rev. i. 7. But it is applicable to us all. We have all been guilty of piercing the Lord Jesus, and are all concerned with suitable affections to look on him.

38 And after this Joseph of Arimathæa, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound *weight.* 40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day;* for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

We have here an account of the burial of the blessed body of our Lord Jesus. The solemn funerals of great men are usually looked at with curiosity; the mournful funerals of dear friends are attended with concern. Come and see an extraordinary funeral; never was the like! Come and see a burial that conquered the grave, and buried it, a burial that beautified the grave and softened it for all believers. *Let us turn aside now, and see this great sight.* Here is,

I. The body begged, *v.* 38. This was done by the interest of *Joseph of Ramah*, or *Arimathea*, of whom no mention is made in all the New-Testament story, but only in the narrative which each of the evangelists gives us of Christ's burial, wherein he was chiefly concerned. Observe, 1. The character of this Joseph. He was a disciple of Christ *incognito—in secret*, a better friend to Christ than he would willingly be known to be. It was his honour that he was a disciple of Christ; and some such there are, that are themselves great men, and unavoidably linked with bad men. But it was his weakness that he was so secretly, when he should have confessed Christ before men, yea, though he had lost his preferment by it. Disciples should openly own themselves, yet Christ may have many that are his disciples sincerely, though secretly; better secretly than not at all, especially if, like Joseph here, they grow stronger and stronger. Some who in less trials have been timorous, yet in greater have been very courageous; so Joseph here. He concealed his affection to Christ *for fear of the Jews*, lest they should put him out of the synagogue, at least out of the sanhedrim, which was all they could do. To Pilate the governor he *went boldly*, and yet *feared the Jews.* The impotent malice of those that can but censure, and revile, and clamour, is sometimes more formidable even to wise and good men than one would think. 2. The part he bore in this affair. He, having by his place access to Pilate, desired leave of him to dispose of the body. His mother and dear relations had neither spirit nor interest to attempt such a thing. His disciples were gone; if nobody appeared, the Jews or soldiers would bury him with the thieves; therefore God raised up this gentleman to interpose in it, that the scripture might be fulfilled, and the decorum owing to his approaching resurrection maintained. Note, When God has work to do he can find out such as are proper to do it, and embolden

them for it. Observe it as an instance of the humiliation of Christ, that his dead body lay at the mercy of a heathen judge, and must be begged before it could be buried, and also that Joseph would not take the body of Christ till he had asked and obtained leave of the governor; for in those things wherein the power of the magistrate is concerned we must ever pay a deference to that power, and peaceably submit to it.

II. The embalming prepared, *v.* 39. This was done by Nicodemus, another person of quality, and in a public post. He brought a *mixture of myrrh and aloes,* which some think were bitter ingredients, to preserve the body, others fragrant ones, to perfume it. Here is, 1. The character of Nicodemus, which is much the same with that of Joseph; he was a secret friend to Christ, though not his constant follower. He at first *came to Jesus by night,* but now owned him publicly, as before, *ch.* vii. 50, 51. That grace which at first is like a bruised reed may afterwards become like a strong cedar, and the trembling lamb *bold as a lion.* See Rom. xiv. 4. It is a wonder that Joseph and Nicodemus, men of such interest, did not appear sooner, and solicit Pilate not to condemn Christ, especially seeing him so loth to do it. Begging his life would have been a nobler piece of service than begging his body. But Christ would have none of his friends to endeavour to prevent his death when his hour was come. While his persecutors were forwarding the accomplishment of the scriptures, his followers must not obstruct it. 2. The kindness of Nicodemus, which was considerable, though of a different nature. Joseph served Christ with his interest, Nicodemus with his purse. Probably, they agreed it between them, that, while one was procuring the grant, the other should be preparing the spices; and this for expedition, because they were straitened in time. But why did they make this ado about Christ's dead body? (1.) Some think we may see in it the weakness of their faith. A firm belief of the resurrection of Christ on the third day would have saved them this care and cost, and have been more acceptable than all spices. Those bodies indeed to whom the grave is a long home need to be clad accordingly; but what need of such furniture of the grave for one that, like a way-faring man, did but turn aside into it, to *tarry for a night or two?* (2.) However, we may plainly see in it the strength of their love. Hereby they showed the value they had for his person and doctrine, and that it was not lessened by the reproach of the cross. Those that had been so industrious to profane his crown, and lay his honour in the dust, might already see that they had imagined a vain thing; for, as God had done him honour in his sufferings, so did men too, even great men. They showed not only the charitable respect of committing his body to the earth, but the honourable respect shown to great men. This they might do, and yet believe and look for his resurrection; nay, this they might do in the belief and expectation of it. Since God designed honour for this body, they would put honour upon it. However, we must do our duty according as the present day and opportunity are, and leave it to God to fulfil his promises in his own way and time.

III. The body got ready, *v.* 40. They *took it* into some house adjoining, and, having washed it from blood and dust, *wound it in linen clothes* very decently, with the spices melted down, it is likely, into an ointment, as *the manner of the Jews is to bury,* or to *embalm* (so Dr. Hammond), as we sear dead bodies. 1. Here was care taken of Christ's body: It was *wound in linen clothes.* Among clothing that belongs to us, Christ put on even the grave-clothes, to make them easy to us, and to enable us to call them our wedding-clothes. They wound the body *with the spices,* for *all his garments,* his grave-clothes not excepted, *smell of myrrh and aloes* (the spices here mentioned) *out of the ivory palaces* (Ps. xlv. 8), and an ivory palace the sepulchre hewn out of a rock was to Christ. Dead bodies and graves are noisome and offensive; hence sin is compared to a *body of death* and an *open sepulchre;* but Christ's sacrifice, being to God as a sweet-smelling savour, hath taken away our pollution. No ointment or perfume can rejoice the heart so as the grave of our Redeemer does, where there is faith to perceive the fragrant odours of it. 2. In conformity to this example, we ought to have regard to the dead bodies of Christians; not to enshrine and adore their relics, no, not those of the most eminent saints and martyrs (nothing like that was done to the dead body of Christ himself), but carefully to deposit them, the dust in the dust, as those who believe that the dead bodies of the saints are still united to Christ and designed for glory and immortality at the last day. The resurrection of the saints will be in virtue of Christ's resurrection, and therefore in burying them we should have an eye to Christ's burial, for he, being dead, thus speaketh. *Thy dead men shall live,* Isa. xxvi. 19. In burying our dead it is not necessary that in all circumstances we imitate the burial of Christ, as if we must be buried in linen, and in a garden, and be embalmed as he was; but his being buried after *the manner of the Jews* teaches us that in things of this nature we should conform to the usages of the country where we live, except in those that are superstitious.

IV. The grave pitched upon, in a garden which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, very near the place where he was crucified. There was a sepulchre, or vault, prepared for the first occasion, but not yet used. Observe,

1. That Christ was buried without the city, for thus the manner of the Jews was to bury, not in their cities, much less in their synagogues,

which some have thought better than our way of burying: yet there was then a peculiar reason for it, which does not hold now, because the touching of a grave contracted a ceremonial pollution: but now that the resurrection of Christ has altered the property of the grave, and done away its pollution for all believers, we need not keep at such a distance from it; nor is it incapable of a good improvement, to have the congregation of the dead in the church-yard, encompassing the congregation of the living in the church, since they also are dying, and in *the midst of life we are in death.* Those that would not superstitiously, but by faith, visit the holy sepulchre, must go forth out of the noise of this world.

2. That Christ was buried in a garden. Observe, (1.) That Joseph had his sepulchre in his garden; so he contrived it, that it might be a memento, [1.] To himself while living; when he was taking the pleasure of his garden, and reaping the products of it, let him think of dying, and be quickened to prepare for it. The garden is a proper place for meditation, and a sepulchre there may furnish us with a proper subject for meditation, and such a one as we are loth to admit in the midst of our pleasures. [2.] To his heirs and successors when he was gone. It is good to acquaint ourselves with the *place of our fathers' sepulchres;* and perhaps we might make our own less formidable if we made theirs more familiar. (2.) That in a sepulchre in a garden Christ's body was laid. In the garden of Eden death and the grave first received their power, and now in a garden they are conquered, disarmed, and triumphed over. In a garden Christ began his passion, and from a garden he would rise, and begin his exaltation. Christ fell to the ground *as a corn of wheat* (*ch.* xii. 24), and therefore was sown in a garden among the seeds, for *his dew is as the dew of herbs,* Isa. xxvi. 19. He is the *fountain of gardens,* Cant. iv. 15.

3. That he was buried in a new sepulchre. This was so ordered, (1.) For the honour of Christ; he was not a common person, and therefore must not mix with common dust. He that was born from a virgin-womb must rise from a virgin-tomb. (2.) For the confirming of the truth of his resurrection, that it might not be suggested that it was not he, but some other that rose now, when many bodies of saints arose; or, that he rose by the power of some other, as the man that was raised by the touch of Elisha's bones, and not by his own power. He that has *made all things new* has new-made the grave for us.

V. The funeral solemnized (*v.* 42): *There laid they Jesus,* that is, the dead body of Jesus. Some think the calling of this *Jesus* intimates the inseparable union between the divine and human nature. Even this dead body was *Jesus—a Saviour,* for his death is our life; Jesus is still the same, Heb. xiii. 8. There they laid him because it was the preparation day.

1. Observe here the deference which the Jews paid to the sabbath, and to the day of preparation. Before the passover-sabbath they had a solemn day of preparation. This day had been ill kept by the chief priests, who called themselves the church, but was well kept by the disciples of Christ, who were branded as dangerous to the church; and it is often so. (1.) They would not put off the funeral till the sabbath day, because the sabbath is to be a day of holy rest and joy, with which the business and sorrow of a funeral do not well agree. (2.) They would not drive it too late on the day of preparation for the sabbath. What is to be done the evening before the sabbath should be so contrived that it may neither intrench upon sabbath time, nor indispose us for sabbath work.

2. Observe the convenience they took of an adjoining sepulchre; the sepulchre they made use of was *nigh at hand.* Perhaps, if they had had time, they would have carried him to Bethany, and buried him among his friends there. And I am sure he had more right to have been buried in the chief of the sepulchres of the sons of David than any of the kings of Judah had; but it was so ordered that he should be laid in a sepulchre nigh at hand, (1.) Because he was to lie there but awhile, as in an inn, and therefore he took the first that offered itself. (2.) Because this was a new sepulchre. Those that prepared it little thought who should handsel it; but the wisdom of God has reaches infinitely beyond ours, and he makes what use he pleases of us and all we have. (3.) We are hereby taught not to be over-curious in the place of our burial. Where the tree falls, why should it not lie? For Christ was buried in the sepulchre that was next at hand. It was faith in the promise of Canaan that directed the Patriarchs' desires to be carried thither for a burying-place; but now, since that promise is superseded by a better, that care is over.

Thus without pomp or solemnity is the body of Jesus laid in the cold and silent grave. Here lies our surety under arrest for our debts, so that if he be released his discharge will be ours. Here is the Sun of righteousness set for awhile, to rise again in greater glory, and set no more. Here lies a seeming captive to death, but a real conqueror over death; for here lies death itself slain, and the grave conquered. *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory.*

CHAP. XX.

This evangelist, though he began not his gospel as the rest did, yet concludes it as they did, with the history of Christ's resurrection; not of the thing itself, for none of them describe how he rose, but of the proofs and evidences of it, which demonstrated that he was risen. The proofs of Christ's resurrection, which we have in this chapter, are, I. Such as occurred immediately at the sepulchre. 1. The sepulchre found empty, and the grave-clothes in good order, ver. 1—10. 2. Two angels appearing to Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, ver. 11—13. 3. Christ himself appearing to her, ver. 14—18. II. Such as occurred afterwards at the meetings of the apostles. 1. At one, the same day at evening that Christ rose, when Thomas was absent, ver. 19—25. 2. At another, that day seven-night, when Thomas was with them, ver. 26—31. What is related here is mostly what was omitted by the other evangelists.

THE first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when

it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. 2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. 3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. 4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. 5 And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. 6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, 7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. 8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

There was no one thing of which the apostles were more concerned to produce substantial proof than the resurrection of their Master, 1. Because it was that which he himself appealed to as the last and most cogent proof of his being the Messiah. Those that would not believe other signs were referred to this sign of the prophet Jonas. And therefore enemies were most solicitous to stifle the notice of this, because it was put on this issue, and, if he be risen, they are not only murderers, but murderers of the Messiah. 2. Because it was upon this the performance of his undertaking for our redemption and salvation did depend. If he give his life a ransom, and do not resume it, it does not appear that his giving it was accepted as a satisfaction. If he be imprisoned for our debt, and lie by it, we are undone, 1 Cor. xv. 17. 3. Because he never showed himself alive after his resurrection to all the people, Acts x. 40, 41. We should have said, "Let his ignominious death be private, and his glorious resurrection public." But God's thoughts are not as ours; and he ordered it that his death should be public before the sun, by the same token that the sun blushed and hid his face upon it. But the demonstrations of his resurrection should be reserved as a favour for his particular friends, and by them be published to the world, that those might be blessed who have not seen, and yet have believed. The method of proof is such as gives abundant satisfaction to those who are piously disposed to receive the doctrine and law of Christ, and yet leaves room for those to object who are willingly ignorant and obstinate in their unbelief. And this is a fair trial, suited to the case of those who are probationers.

In these verses we have the first step towards the proof of Christ's resurrection, which is, that the sepulchre was found empty. *He is not here*, and, if so, they must tell us where he is, or we conclude him risen.

I. Mary Magdalene, coming to the sepulchre, finds the *stone taken away*. This evangelist does not mention the other women that went with Mary Magdalene, but her only, because she was the most active and forward in this visit to the sepulchre, and in her appeared the most affection; and it was an affection kindled by a good cause, in consideration of the great things Christ had done for her. Much was forgiven her, therefore she loved much. She had shown her affection to him while he lived, attended his doctrine, ministered to him of her substance, Luke viii. 2, 3. It does not appear that she had any business now at Jerusalem, but to wait upon him, for the women were not bound to go up to the feast, and probably she and others followed him the closer, as Elisha did Elijah, now that they knew their Master would shortly be *taken from their head*, 2 Kings ii. 1—6. The continued instances of her respect to him at and after his death prove the sincerity of her love. Note, Love to Christ, if it be cordial, will be constant. Her love to Christ was *strong as death*, the death of the cross, for it stood by that; *cruel as the grave*, for it made a visit to that, and was not deterred by its terrors.

1. She *came to the sepulchre*, to wash the dead body with her tears, for she *went to the grave, to weep there*, and to *anoint it with the ointment* she had prepared. The grave is a house that people do not care for making visits to. They that are *free among the dead* are *separated from the living;* and it must be an extraordinary affection to the person which will endear his grave to us. It is especially frightful to the weak and timorous sex. Could she, that had not strength enough to *roll away the stone*, pretend to such a presence of mind as to enter the grave? The Jews' religion forbade them to meddle any more than needs must with graves and dead bodies. In visiting Christ's sepulchre she exposed herself, and perhaps the disciples, to the suspicion of a design to *steal him away;* and what real service could she do him by it? But her love answers these, and a thousand such objections. Note, (1.) We must study to do honour to Christ in those things wherein yet we cannot be profitable to him. (2.) Love to Christ will

take off the terror of death and the grave. If we cannot come to Christ but through that darksome valley, even in that, if we love him, we shall *fear no evil.*

2. She came as soon as she could, for she came, (1.) Upon the *first day of the week*, as soon as ever the sabbath was gone, longing, not to *sell corn* and to *set forth wheat* (as Amos viii. 5), but to be at the sepulchre. Those that love Christ will take the first opportunity of testifying their respect to him. This was the first Christian sabbath, and she begins it accordingly with enquiries after Christ. She had spent the day before in commemorating the work of creation, and therefore rested; but now she is upon search into the work of redemption, and therefore makes a visit to Christ and him crucified. (2.) She came *early, while it was yet dark;* so early did she set out. Note, Those who would seek Christ so as to find him must seek him early; that is, [1.] Seek him solicitously, with such a care as even breaks the sleep; be up early for fear of missing him. [2.] Seek him industriously; we must deny ourselves and our own repose in pursuit of Christ. [3.] Seek him betimes, early in our days, early every day. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning.* That day is in a fair way to be well ended that is thus begun. Those that diligently enquire after Christ *while it is yet dark* shall have such light given them concerning him as shall shine *more and more.*

3. She found the stone taken away, which she had seen *rolled to the door of the sepulchre.* Now this was, (1.) A surprise to her, for she little expected it. Christ crucified is the fountain of life. His grave is one of the wells of salvation; if we come to it in faith, though to a carnal heart it be a spring shut up, we shall find the stone rolled away (as Gen. xxix. 10) and free access to the comforts of it. Surprising comforts are the frequent encouragements of early seekers. (2.) It was the beginning of a glorious discovery; the Lord was risen, though she did not at first apprehend it so. Note, [1.] Those that are most constant in their adherence to Christ, and most diligent in their enquiries after him, have commonly the first and sweetest notices of the divine grace. Mary Magdalene, who followed Christ to the last in his humiliation, met him with the first in his exaltation. [2.] God ordinarily reveals himself and his comforts to us by degrees; to raise our expectations and quicken our enquiries.

II. Finding the stone taken away, she hastens back to Peter and John, who probably lodged together at that end of the town, not far off, and acquaints them with it: "*They have taken the Lord out of the sepulchre*, envying him the honour of such a decent burying-place, *and we know not where they have laid him*, nor where to find him, that we may pay him the remainder of our last respects." Observe here, 1. What a notion Mary had of the thing as it now appeared; she found the stone gone, looked into the grave, and saw it empty. Now one would expect that the first thought that offered itself would have been, Surely the Lord is risen; for whenever he had told them that he should be crucified, which she had now lately seen accomplished, he still subjoined in the same breath that *the third day he should rise again.* Could she feel the great earthquake that happened as she was coming to the sepulchre, or getting ready to come, and now see the grave empty, and yet have no thought of the resurrection enter into her mind? what, no conjecture, no suspicion of it? So it seems by the odd construction she puts upon the removing of the stone, which was very far fetched. Note, When we come to reflect upon our own conduct in a *cloudy and dark day*, we shall stand amazed at our dulness and forgetfulness, that we could miss of such thoughts as afterwards appear obvious, and how they could be so far out of the way when we had occasion for them. She suggested, *They have taken away the Lord;* either the chief priests have taken him away, to put him in a worse place, or Joseph and Nicodemus have, upon second thoughts, taken him away, to avoid the ill-will of the Jews. Whatever was her suspicion, it seems it was a great vexation and disturbance to her that the body was gone; whereas, if she had understood it rightly, nothing could be more happy. Note, Weak believers often make that the matter of their complaint which is really just ground of hope, and matter of joy. We cry out that this and the other creature-comfort are taken away, and we know not how to retrieve them, when indeed the removal of our temporal comforts, which we lament, is in order to the resurrection of our spiritual comforts, which we should rejoice in too. 2. What a narrative she made of it to Peter and John. She did not stand poring upon the grief herself, but acquaints her friends with it. Note, The communication of sorrows is one good improvement of the communion of saints. Observe, Peter, though he had denied his Master, had not deserted his Master's friends; by this appears the sincerity of his repentance, that he associated with the disciple whom Jesus loved. And the disciples' keeping up their intimacy with him as formerly, notwithstanding his fall, teaches us to restore those with a spirit of meekness that have been faulty. If God has received them upon their repentance, why should not we?

III. Peter and John go with all speed to the sepulchre, to satisfy themselves of the truth of what was told them, and to see if they could make any further discoveries, *v.* 3, 4. Some think that the other disciples were with Peter and John when the news came; for they *told these things to the eleven,*

Luke xxiv. 9. Others think that Mary Magdalene told her story only to Peter and John, and that the other women told theirs to the other disciples; yet none of them went to the sepulchre but Peter and John, who were two of the first three of Christ's disciples, often distinguished from the rest by special favours. Note, It is well when those that are more honoured than others with the privileges of disciples are more active than others in the duty of disciples, more willing to take pains and run hazards in a good work. 1. See here what use we should make of the experience and observations of others. When Mary told them what she had seen, they would not in this sense take her word, but would go and see with their own eyes. Do others tell us of the comfort and benefit of ordinances? Let us be engaged thereby to make trial of them. Come and see how good it is to draw near to God. 2. See how ready we should be to share with our friends in their cares and fears. Peter and John hastened to the sepulchre, that they might be able to give Mary a satisfactory answer to her jealousies. We should not grudge any pains we take for the succouring and comforting of the weak and timorous followers of Christ. 3. See what haste we should make in a good work, and when we are going on a good errand. Peter and John consulted neither their ease nor their gravity, but ran to the sepulchre, that they might show the strength of their zeal and affection, and might lose no time. If we are in the way of God's commandments, we should run in that way. 4. See what a good thing it is to have good company in a good work. Perhaps neither of these disciples would have ventured to the sepulchre alone, but, being both together, they made no difficulty of it. See Eccl. iv. 9. 5. See what a laudable emulation it is among disciples to strive which shall excel, which shall exceed, in that which is good. It was no breach of ill manners for John, though the younger, to outrun Peter, and get before him. We must do our best, and neither envy those that can do better, nor despise those that do as they can, though they come behind. (1.) He that got foremost in this race was *the disciple whom Jesus loved* in a special manner, and who therefore in a special manner loved Jesus. Note, Sense of Christ's love to us, kindling love in us to him again, will make us to excel in virtue. The love of Christ will constrain us more than any thing to abound in duty. (2.) He that was cast behind was Peter, who had denied his Master, and was in sorrow and shame for it, and this clogged him as a weight; sense of guilt cramps us, and hinders our enlargement in the service of God. When conscience is offended we lose ground.

IV. Peter and John, having come to the sepulchre, prosecute the enquiry, yet improve little in the discovery.

1. John went no further than Mary Magdalene had done. (1.) He had the curiosity to look into the sepulchre, and saw it was empty. He *stooped down*, and *looked in*. Those that would find the knowledge of Christ must stoop down, and look in, must with a humble heart submit to the authority of divine revelation, and must *look wistly*. (2.) Yet he had not courage to go into the sepulchre. The warmest affections are not always accompanied with the boldest resolutions; many are swift to run religion's race that are not stout to fight her battles.

2. Peter, though he came last, went in first, and made a more exact discovery than John had done, *v.* 6, 7. Though John outran him, he did not therefore turn back, nor stand still, but made after him as fast as he could; and, while John was with much caution looking in, he came, and with great courage *went into the sepulchre*.

(1.) Observe here the boldness of Peter, and how God dispenses his gifts variously. John could out-run Peter, but Peter could out-dare John. It is seldom true of the same persons, what David says poetically of Saul and Jonathan, that they were *swifter than eagles*, and yet *stronger than lions*, 2 Sam. i. 23. Some disciples are quick, and they are useful to quicken those that are slow; others are bold, and they are useful to embolden those that are timorous; *diversity of gifts, but one Spirit*. Peter's venturing into the sepulchre may teach us, [1.] That those who in good earnest seek after Christ must not frighten themselves with bugbears and foolish fancies: "There is a lion in the way, a ghost in the grave." [2.] That good Christians need not be afraid of the grave, since Christ has lain in it; for to them there is nothing in it frightful; it is not the pit of destruction, nor are the worms in it never-dying worms. Let us therefore not indulge, but conquer, the fear we are apt to conceive upon the sight of a dead body, or being alone among the graves; and, since we must be dead and in the grave shortly, let us make death and the grave familiar to us, as our near kindred, Job xvii. 14. [3.] We must be willing to go through the grave to Christ; that way he went to his glory, and so must we. If we cannot see God's face and live, better die than never see it. See Job xix. 25, &c.

(2.) Observe the posture in which he found things in the sepulchre. [1.] Christ had left his grave-clothes behind him there; what clothes he appeared in to his disciples we are not told, but he never appeared in his grave-clothes, as ghosts are supposed to do; no, he laid them aside, *First*, Because he arose to die no more; death was to have no more dominion over him, Rom. vi. 9. Lazarus came out with his grave-clothes on, for he was to use them again; but Christ, rising to an immortal life, came out free from those incumbrances. *Secondly*, Be-

cause he was going to be clothed with the robes of glory, therefore he lays aside these rags; in the heavenly paradise there will be no more occasion for clothes than there was in the earthly. The ascending prophet dropped his mantle. *Thirdly,* When we arise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, we must leave our grave-clothes behind us, must put off all our corruptions. *Fourthly,* Christ left those in the grave, as it were, for our use; if the grave be a bed to the saints, thus he hath sheeted that bed, and made it ready for them; and the napkin by itself is of use for the mourning survivors to *wipe away their tears.* [2.] The grave-clothes were found in very good order, which serves for an evidence that his body was not stolen away while men slept. Robbers of tombs have been known to take away the clothes and leave the body; but none [prior to the practices of modern resurrectionists] ever took away the body and left the clothes, especially when it was fine linen and new, Mark xv. 46. Any one would rather choose to carry a dead body in its clothes than naked. Or, if those that were supposed to have stolen it would have left the grave-clothes behind, yet it cannot be supposed they should find leisure to fold up the linen.

(3.) See how Peter's boldness encouraged John; now he took heart and ventured in (*v.* 8), and *he saw and believed;* not barely believed what Mary said, that the body was gone (no thanks to him to believe what *he saw),* but he began to believe that Jesus was risen to life again, though his faith, as yet, was weak and wavering.

[1.] John followed Peter in venturing. It should seem, he durst not have gone into the sepulchre if Peter had not gone in first. Note, It is good to be emboldened in a good work by the boldness of others. The dread of difficulty and danger will be taken off by observing the resolution and courage of others. Perhaps John's quickness had made Peter run faster, and now Peter's boldness makes John venture further, than otherwise either the one or the other would have done; though Peter had lately fallen under the disgrace of being a deserter, and John had been advanced to the honour of a confidant (Christ having committed his mother to him), yet John not only associated with Peter, but thought it no disparagement to follow him.

[2.] Yet, it should seem, John got the start of Peter in believing. Peter saw and wondered (Luke xxiv. 12), but John saw and believed. A mind disposed to contemplation may perhaps sooner receive the evidence of divine truth than a mind disposed to action. But what was the reason that they were so slow of heart to believe? The evangelist tells us (*v.* 9), as yet they *knew not the scripture,* that is, they did not consider, and apply, and duly improve, what they knew of the scripture, that he must *rise again from the dead.* The Old Testament spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah; they believed him to be the Messiah; he himself had often told them that, according to the scriptures of the Old Testament, he should rise again; but they had not presence of mind sufficient by these to explain the present appearances. Observe here, *First,* How unapt the disciples themselves were, at first, to believe the resurrection of Christ, which confirms the testimony they afterwards gave with so much assurance concerning it; for, by their backwardness to believe it, it appears that they were not credulous concerning it, nor of those simple ones that believe every word. If they had had any design to advance their own interest by it, they would greedily have caught at the first spark of its evidence, would have raised and supported one another's expectations of it, and have prepared the minds of those that followed them to receive the notices of it; but we find, on the contrary, that their hopes were frustrated, it was to them as a strange thing, and one of the furthest things from their thoughts. Peter and John were so shy of believing it at first that nothing less than the most convincing proof the thing was capable of could bring them to testify it afterwards with so much assurance. Hereby it appears that they were not only honest men, who would not deceive others, but cautious men, who would not themselves be imposed upon. *Secondly,* What was the reason of their slowness to believe; because as yet they *knew not the scripture.* This seems to be the evangelist's acknowledgment of his own fault among the rest; he does not say, "For as yet Jesus had not appeared to them, had not shown them his hands and his side," but, "As yet he had not *opened their understandings to understand the scripture* (Luke xxiv. 44, 45), for that is the *most sure word of prophecy.*

3. Peter and John pursued their enquiry no further, but desisted, hovering between faith and unbelief (*v.* 10): *The disciples went away,* not much the wiser, *to their own home,* πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς—*to their own friends and companions,* the rest of the disciples to their own lodgings, for homes they had none at Jerusalem. They went away, (1.) For fear of being taken up upon suspicion of a design to steal away the body, or of being charged with it now that it was gone. Instead of improving their faith, their care is to secure themselves, to shift for their own safety. In difficult dangerous times it is hard even for good men to go on in their work with the resolution that becomes them. (2.) Because they were at a loss, and knew not what to do next, nor what to make of what they had seen; and therefore, not having courage to stay at the grave, they resolve to go home, and wait till God shall *reveal even this unto them,* which is an instance of their weakness as yet. (3.) It is probable that the

rest of the disciples were together; to them they return, to make report of what they had discovered, and to consult with them what was to be done; and, probably, now they appointed their meeting in the evening, when Christ came to them. It is observable that before Peter and John came to the sepulchre an angel had appeared there, rolled away the stone, frightened the guard, and comforted the women; as soon as they were gone from the sepulchre, Mary Magdalene here sees two angels in the sepulchre (*v.* 12), and yet Peter and John come to the sepulchre, and go into it, and see none. What shall we make of this? Where were the angels when Peter and John were at the sepulchre, who appeared there before and after? [1.] Angels appear and disappear at pleasure, according to the orders and instructions given them. They may be, and are really, where they are not visibly; nay, it should seem, may be visible to one and not to another, at the same time, Num. xxii. 23; 2 Kings vi. 17. How they make themselves visible, then invisible, and then visible again, it is presumption for us to enquire; but that they do so is plain from this story. [2.] This favour was shown to those who were early and constant in their enquiries after Christ, and was the reward of those that came first and staid last, but denied to those that made a transient visit. [3.] The apostles were not to receive their instructions from the angels, but from the Spirit of grace. See Heb. ii. 5.

11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre, 12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. 14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. 16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. 17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God, and your God. 18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

St. Mark tells us that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene (Mark xvi. 9); that appearance is here largely related; and we may observe,

I. The constancy and fervency of Mary Magdalene's affection to the Lord Jesus, *v.* 11.

1. She staid at the sepulchre, when Peter and John were gone, because there her Master had lain, and there she was likeliest to hear some tidings of him. Note, (1.) Where there is a true love to Christ there will be a constant adherence to him, and a resolution with purpose of heart to cleave to him. This good woman, though she has lost him, yet, rather than seem to desert him, will abide by his grave for his sake, and continue in his love even when she wants the comfort of it. (2.) Where there is a true desire of acquaintance with Christ there will be a constant attendance on the means of knowledge. See Hos. vi. 2, 3, *The third day he will raise us up;* and then shall we know the meaning of that resurrection, if we follow on to know, as Mary here.

2. She staid there weeping, and these tears loudly bespoke her affection to her Master. Those that have lost Christ have cause to weep; she wept at the remembrance of his bitter sufferings; wept for his death, and the loss which she and her friends and the country sustained by it; wept to think of returning home without him; wept because she did not now find his body. Those that seek Christ must *seek him sorrowing* (Luke ii. 48), must weep, not for him, but for themselves.

3. *As she wept, she looked into the sepulchre,* that her eye might affect her heart. When we are in search of something that we have lost we look again and again in the place where we last left it, and expected to have found it. She will look *yet seven times,* not knowing but that at length she may see some encouragement. Note, (1.) Weeping must not hinder seeking. Though she wept, she *stooped down and looked in.* (2.) Those are likely to seek and find that seek with affection, that seek in tears.

II. The vision she had of two angels in the sepulchre, *v.* 12. Observe here,

1. The description of the persons she saw. They were *two angels in white, sitting* (probably on some benches or ledges hewn out in the rock) one at *the head,* and the other at the *feet,* of the grave. Here we have,

(1.) Their nature. They were angels, messengers from heaven, sent on purpose, on this great occasion, [1.] To honour the Son,

and to grace the solemnity of his resurrection. Now that the Son of God was again to be brought into the world, the angels have a charge to attend him, as they did at his birth, Heb. i. 6. [2.] To comfort the saints; to speak good words to those that were in sorrow, and, by giving them notice that the Lord was risen, to prepare them for the sight of him.

(2.) Their number: *two*, not a *multitude of the heavenly host*, to sing praise, only two, to bear witness; for out of the mouth of two witnesses this word would be established.

(3.) Their array: They were *in white*, denoting, [1.] Their purity and holiness. The best of men *standing before the angels*, and compared with them, *are clothed in filthy garments* (Zech. iii. 3), but angels are spotless; and glorified saints, when they come to be as the angels, shall *walk with Christ in white*. [2.] Their glory, and glorying, upon this occasion. The white in which they appeared represented the brightness of that state into which Christ was now risen.

(4.) Their posture and place: They sat, as it were, reposing themselves in Christ's grave; for angels, though they needed not a restoration, were obliged to Christ for their establishment. These angels went into the grave, to teach us not to be afraid of it, nor to think that our resting in it awhile will be any prejudice to our immortality; no, matters are so ordered that the grave is not much out of our way to heaven. It intimates likewise that angels are to be employed about the saints, not only at their death, to carry their souls into Abraham's bosom, but at the great day, *to raise their bodies*, Matt. xxiv. 31. These angelic guards (and angels are called *watchers*, Dan. iv. 23), keeping possession of the sepulchre, when they had frightened away the guards which the enemies had set, represents Christ's victory over the powers of darkness, routing and defeating them. Thus Michael and his angels are more than conquerors. Their sitting to face one another, one at his bed's head, the other at his bed's feet, denotes their care of the entire body of Christ, his mystical as well as his natural body, from head to foot; it may also remind us of the two cherubim, placed one at either end of the mercy-seat, looking one at another, Exod. xxv. 18. Christ crucified was the great propitiatory, at the head and feet of which were these two cherubim, not with flaming swords, to keep us from, but welcome messengers, to direct us to, the way of life.

2. Their compassionate enquiry into the cause of Mary Magdalene's grief (*v.* 13): *Woman, why weepest thou?* This question was, (1.) A rebuke to her weeping: "*Why weepest thou*, when thou hast cause to rejoice?" Many of the floods of our tears would *dry away* before such a search as this into the fountain of them. *Why art thou cast down?* (2.) It was designed to show how much angels are concerned at the griefs of the saints, having a charge to minister to them for their comfort. Christians should thus sympathize with one another. (3.) It was only to make an occasion of informing her of that which would turn her mourning into rejoicing, would *put off her sackcloth, and gird her with gladness.*

3. The melancholy account she gives them of her present distress: *Because they have taken away* the blessed body I came to embalm, *and I know not where they have laid it.* The same story she had told, *v.* 2. In it we may see, (1.) The weakness of her faith. If she had had faith *as a grain of mustard-seed*, this mountain would have been removed; but we often perplex ourselves needlessly with imaginary difficulties, which faith would discover to us as real advantages. Many good people complain of the clouds and darkness they are under, which are the necessary methods of grace for the humbling of their souls, the mortifying of their sins, and the endearing of Christ to them. (2.) The strength of her love. Those that have a true affection for Christ cannot but be in great affliction when they have lost either the comfortable tokens of his love in their souls or the comfortable opportunities of conversing with him, and doing him honour, in his ordinances. Mary Magdalene is not diverted from her enquiries by the surprise of the vision, nor satisfied with the honour of it; but still she harps upon the same string: *They have taken away my Lord.* A sight of angels and their smiles will not suffice without a sight of Christ and God's smiles in him. Nay, the sight of angels is but an opportunity of pursuing her enquiries after Christ. All creatures, the most excellent, the most dear, should be used as means, and but as means, to bring us into acquaintance with God in Christ. The angels asked her, *Why weepest thou?* I have cause enough to weep, says she, for *they have taken away my Lord*, and, like Micah, *What have I more?* Do you ask, Why I weep? *My beloved has withdrawn himself, and is gone.* Note, None know, but those who have experienced it, the sorrow of a deserted soul, that has had comfortable evidences of the love of God in Christ, and hopes of heaven, but has now lost them, and walks in darkness; such a *wounded spirit who can bear?*

III. Christ's appearing to her while she was talking with the angels, and telling them her case. Before they had given her any answer, Christ himself steps in, to satisfy her enquiries, for God now speaketh to us by his Son; none but he himself can direct us to himself. Mary would fain know where her Lord is, and behold he is at her right hand. Note, 1. Those that will be content with nothing short of a sight of Christ shall be put off with nothing less. He never said to the soul that sought him, *Seek in vain.* "Is it Christ that thou wouldest have? Christ thou

shalt have." 2. Christ, in manifesting himself to those that seek him, often outdoes their expectations. Mary longs to see the dead body of Christ, and complains of the loss of that, and behold she sees him alive. Thus he does for his praying people more than they are able to ask or think. In this appearance of Christ to Mary observe,

(1.) How he did at first conceal himself from her.

[1.] He stood as a common person, and she looked upon him accordingly, *v.* 14. She stood expecting an answer to her complaint from the angels; and either seeing the shadow, or hearing the tread, of some person behind her, she *turned herself back* from talking with the angels, and *sees Jesus himself* standing, the very person she was looking for, and yet she *knew not that it was Jesus.* Note, *First, The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart* (Ps. xxxiv. 18), nearer than they are aware. Those that seek Christ, though they do not see him, may yet be sure he is not far from them. *Secondly,* Those that diligently seek the Lord will turn every way in their enquiry after him. *Mary turned herself back,* in hopes of some discoveries. Several of the ancients suggest that Mary was directed to look behind her by the angels' rising up, and doing their obeisance to the Lord Jesus, whom they saw before Mary did; and that she looked back to see to whom it was they paid such a profound reverence. But, if so, it is not likely that she would have taken him for the gardener; rather, therefore, it was her earnest desire in seeking that made her turn every way. *Thirdly,* Christ is often near his people, and they are not aware of him. She *knew not that it was Jesus;* not that he appeared in any other likeness, but either it was a careless transient look she cast upon him, and, her eyes being full of care, she could not so well distinguish, or *they were holden, that she should not know him,* as those of the two disciples, Luke xxiv. 16.

[2.] He asked her a common question, and she answered him accordingly, *v.* 15.

First, The question he asked her was natural enough, and what any one would have asked her: "*Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?* What business hast thou here in the garden so early? And what is all this noise and ado for?" Perhaps it was spoken with some roughness, as Joseph spoke to his brethren when he made himself strange, before he made himself known to them. It should seem, this was the first word Christ spoke after his resurrection: "*Why weepest thou?* I am risen." The resurrection of Christ has enough in it to allay all our sorrows, to check the streams, and dry up the fountains, of our tears. Observe here, Christ takes cognizance, 1. Of his people's griefs, and enquires, *Why weep you?* He bottles their tears, and records them in his book. 2. Of his people's cares, and enquires, *Whom seek you, and what would you have?* When he knows they are seeking him, yet he will know it from them; they must tell him whom they seek.

Secondly, The reply she made him is natural enough; she does not give him a direct answer, but, as if she should say, "Why do you banter me, and upbraid me with my tears? You know why I weep, and whom I seek;" and therefore, *supposing him to be the gardener,* the person employed by Joseph to dress and keep his garden, who, she thought, was come thither thus early to his work, she said, *Sir, if thou hast carried him hence,* pray *tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.* See here, 1. The error of her understanding. She supposed our Lord Jesus to be the gardener, perhaps because he asked what authority she had to be there. Note, Troubled spirits, in a cloudy and dark day, are apt to misrepresent Christ to themselves, and to put wrong constructions upon the methods of his providence and grace. 2. The truth of her affection. See how her heart was set upon finding Christ. She puts the question to every one she meets, like the careful spouse, *Saw you him whom my soul loveth?* She speaks respectfully to a gardener, and calls him *Sir,* in hopes to gain some intelligence from him concerning her beloved. When she speaks of Christ, she does not name him; but, *If thou have borne him hence,* taking it for granted that this gardener was full of thoughts concerning this Jesus as well as she, and therefore could not but know whom she meant. Another evidence of the strength of her affection was that, wherever he was laid, she would undertake to remove him. Such a body, with such a weight of spices about it, was much more than she could pretend to carry; but true love thinks it can do more than it can, and makes nothing of difficulties. She supposed this gardener grudged that the body of one that was ignominiously crucified should have the honour to be laid in his master's new tomb, and that therefore he had removed it to some sorry place, which he thought fitter for it. Yet Mary does not threaten to tell his master, and get him turned out of his place for it; but undertakes to find out some other sepulchre, to which he might be welcome. Christ needs not to stay where he is thought a burden.

(2.) How Christ at length made himself known to her, and, by a pleasing surprise, gave her infallible assurances of his resurrection. Joseph at length said to his brethren, *I am Joseph.* So Christ here to Mary Magdalene, now that he is entered upon his exalted state. Observe,

[1.] How Christ discovered himself to this good woman that was seeking him in tears (*v.* 16): *Jesus saith unto her, Mary.* It was said with an emphasis, and that air of kindness and freedom with which he was wont to speak to her. Now he changed his voice, and

spoke like himself, not like the gardener. Christ's way of making himself known to his people is by his word, his word applied to their souls, speaking to them in particular. When those whom God *knew by name* in the counsels of his love (Exod. xxxiii. 12) *are called by name* in the efficacy of his grace, then *he reveals his Son in them*, as in Paul (Gal. i. 16), when Christ called to him by name, *Saul, Saul.* Christ's *sheep know his voice, ch.* x. 4. This one word, *Mary*, was like that to the disciples in the storm, *It is I.* Then the word of Christ does us good when we put our names into the precepts and promises. "In this Christ calls to me, and speaks to me."

[2.] How readily she received this discovery. When Christ said, "Mary, dost thou not know me? are you and I grown such strangers?" she was presently aware who it was, as the spouse (Cant. ii. 8), *It is the voice of my beloved.* She turned herself, and said, *Rabboni, My Master.* It might properly be read with an interrogation, "*Rabboni? Is it my master?* Nay, but is it indeed?" Observe, *First*, The title of respect she gives him: *My Master*; διδάσκαλε—*a teaching master.* The Jews called their doctors *Rabbies*, great men. Their critics tell us that *Rabbon* was with them a more honourable title than *Rabbi;* and therefore Mary chooses that, and adds a note of appropriation, *My great Master.* Note, Notwithstanding the freedom of communion which Christ is pleased to admit us to with himself, we must remember that he is our *Master*, and to be approached with a *godly fear. Secondly*, With what liveliness of affection she gives this title to Christ. *She turned* from the angels, whom she had in her eye, to look unto Jesus. We must take off our regards from all creatures, even the brightest and best, to fix them upon Christ, from whom nothing must divert us, and with whom nothing must interfere. When *she thought it had been the gardener*, she looked another way while speaking to him; but now that she knew the voice of Christ *she turned herself.* The soul that hears Christ's voice, and is turned to him, calls him, with joy and triumph, *My Master.* See with what pleasure those who love Christ speak of his authority over them. *My Master, my great Master.*

[3.] The further instructions that Christ gave her (*v.* 17): "*Touch me not*, but go and carry the news to the disciples."

First, He diverts her from the expectation of familiar society and conversation with him at this time: *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended.* Mary was so transported with the sight of her dear Master that she forgot herself, and that state of glory into which he was now entering, and was ready to express her joy by affectionate embraces of him, which Christ here forbids at this time. 1. *Touch me not* thus at all, for I am to ascend to heaven. He bade the disciples touch him, for the confirmation of their faith; he allowed the women to take hold of his feet, and worship him (Matt. xxviii. 9); but Mary, supposing that he was risen, as Lazarus was, to live among them constantly, and converse with them freely as he had done, upon that presumption was about to take hold of his hand with her usual freedom. This mistake Christ rectified; she must believe him, and adore him, as exalted, but must not expect to be familiar with him as formerly. See 2 Cor. v. 16. He forbids her to dote upon his bodily presence, to set her heart on this, or expect its continuance, and leads her to the spiritual converse and communion which she should have with him after he was ascended to his Father; for the greatest joy of his resurrection was that it was a step towards his ascension. Mary thought, now that her Master was risen, he would presently set up a temporal kingdom, such as they had long promised themselves. "No," says Christ, "touch me not, with any such thought; think not to lay hold on me, so as to detain me here; for, though *I am not yet ascended, go to my brethren, and tell them, I am to ascend.*" As before his death, so now after his resurrection, he still harps upon this, that he was going away, was *no more in the world;* and therefore they must look higher than his bodily presence, and look further than the present state of things. 2. "*Touch me not*, do not stay to touch me now, stay not now to make any further enquiries, or give any further expressions of joy, for *I am not yet ascended*, I shall not depart immediately, it may as well be done another time; the best service thou canst do now is to carry the tidings to the disciples; lose no time therefore, but go away with all speed." Note, Public service ought to be preferred before private satisfaction. *It is more blessed to give than to receive.* Jacob must let an angel go, when the day breaks, and it is time for him to look after his family. Mary must not stay to talk with her Master, but must carry his message; for it is a day of good tidings, which she must not engross the comfort of, but hand it to others. See that story, 2 Kings vii. 9.

Secondly, He directs her what message to carry to his disciples: *But go to my brethren, and tell them*, not only that I am risen (she could have told them that of herself, for she had seen him), but that *I ascend.* Observe,

a. To whom this message is sent: *Go to my brethren* with it; for he is not ashamed to call them so. (*a.*) He was now entering upon his glory, and was *declared to be the Son of God with* greater *power* than ever, yet he owns his disciples as his brethren, and expresses himself with more tender affection to them than before; he had called them friends, but never brethren till now. Though Christ be high, yet he is not haughty. Notwithstanding his elevation, he disdains not to own his poor relations. (*b.*) His disciples had lately carried themselves very disingenu-

ously towards him; he had never seen them together since *they all forsook him and fled*, when he was apprehended; justly might he now have sent them an angry message: "Go to yonder treacherous deserters, and tell them, I will never trust them any more, or have any thing more to do with them." No, he forgives, he forgets, and does not upbraid.

b. By whom it is sent: by *Mary Magdalene, out of whom had been cast seven devils*, yet now thus favoured. This was her reward for her constancy in adhering to Christ, and enquiring after him; and a tacit rebuke to the apostles, who had not been so close as she was in attending on the dying Jesus, nor so early as she was in meeting the rising Jesus; she becomes an apostle to the apostles.

c. What the message itself is: *I ascend to my Father.* Two full breasts of consolation are here in these words:—

(*a.*) Our joint-relation to God, resulting from our union with Christ, is an unspeakable comfort. Speaking of that inexhaustible spring of light, life, and bliss, he says, He is *my Father, and your Father; my God, and your God.* This is very expressive of the near relation that subsists between Christ and believers: *he that sanctifieth, and those that are sanctified, are both one; for they agree in one*, Heb. ii. 11. Here we have such an advancement of Christians, and such a condescension of Christ, as bring them very near together, so admirably well is the matter contrived, in order to their union. [*a.*] It is the great dignity of believers that *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ* is, in him, *their Father.* A vast difference indeed there is between the respective foundations of the relation; he is Christ's Father by eternal generation, ours by a gracious adoption; yet even this warrants us to call him, as Christ did, *Abba, Father.* This gives a reason why Christ called them brethren, because his Father was their Father. Christ was now ascending to appear as an *advocate with the Father*—with *his Father*, and therefore we may hope he will prevail for any thing—with *our Father*, and therefore we may hope he will prevail for us. [*b.*] It is the great condescension of Christ that he is pleased to own the believer's God for his God: *My God, and your God;* mine, that he may be yours; the God of the Redeemer, to support him (Ps. lxxxix. 26), that he might be the God of the redeemed, to save them. The summary of the new covenant is that God *will be to us a God;* and therefore Christ being the surety and head of the covenant, who is primarily dealt with, and believers only through him as his spiritual seed, this covenant-relation fastens first upon him, God becomes his God, and so ours; we partaking of a divine nature, Christ's Father is our Father; and, he partaking of the human nature, our God is his God.

(*b.*) Christ's ascension into heaven, in further prosecution of his undertaking for us, is likewise an unspeakable comfort: "Tell them I must shortly ascend; that is the next step I am to take." Now this was intended to be, [*a.*] A word of caution to these disciples, not to expect the continuance of his bodily presence on earth, nor the setting up of his temporal kingdom among men, which they dreamed of. "No, tell them, I am risen, not to stay with them, but to go on their errand to heaven." Thus those who are raised to a spiritual life, in conformity to Christ's resurrection, must reckon that they rise to ascend; *they are quickened with Christ that they may sit with him in heavenly places*, Eph. ii. 5, 6. Let them not think that this earth is to be their home and rest; no, being born from heaven, they are bound for heaven; their eye and aim must be upon another world, and this must be ever upon their hearts, I ascend, therefore must I seek things above. [*b.*] A word of comfort to them, and to all *that shall believe in him through their word;* he was then ascending, he is now *ascended to his Father, and our Father.* This was his advancement; he ascended to receive those honours and powers which were to be the recompence of his humiliation; he says it with triumph, that those who love him may rejoice. This is our advantage; for he ascended as a conqueror, *leading captivity captive* for us (Ps. lxviii. 18), he ascended as our forerunner, *to prepare a place for us*, and to be ready to receive us. This message was like that which Joseph's brethren brought to Jacob concerning him (Gen. xlv. 26), *Joseph is yet alive*, and not only so, *vivit imo, et in senatum venit—he lives, and comes into the senate too; he is governor over all the land of Egypt;* all power is his.

Some make those words, *I ascend to my God and your God*, to include a promise of our resurrection, in the virtue of Christ's resurrection; for Christ had proved the resurrection of the dead from these words, *I am the God of Abraham*, Matt. xxii. 32. So that Christ here insinuates, "As he is my God, and hath therefore raised me, so he is your God, and will therefore raise you, and be your God, Rev. xxi. 3. *Because I live, you shall live also.* I now ascend, to honour my God, and you shall ascend to him as your God.

IV. Here is Mary Magdalene's faithful report of what she had seen and heard to the disciples (*v.* 18): *She came and told the disciples*, whom she found together, *that she had seen the Lord.* Peter and John had left her seeking him carefully with tears, and would not stay to seek him with her; and now she comes to tell them that she had found him and to rectify the mistake she had led them into by enquiring after the dead body, for now she found it was a living body and a glorified one; so that she found what she sought, and, what was infinitely better, she had joy in her sight of the Master herself, and was willing to communicate of her joy,

for she knew it would be good news to them. When God comforts us, it is with this design, that we may comfort others. And as she told them what she had seen, so also what she had heard; she had seen the Lord alive, of which this was a token (and a good token it was) *that he had spoken these things unto her* as a message to be delivered to them, and she delivered it faithfully. Those that are acquainted with the word of Christ themselves should communicate their knowledge for the good of others, and not grudge that others should know as much as they do.

19 Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. 20 And when he had so said, he showed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained. 24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

The infallible proof of Christ's resurrection was his *showing himself alive*, Acts i. 3. In these verses, we have an account of his first appearance to the college of the disciples, on the day on which he rose. He had sent them the tidings of his resurrection by trusty and credible messengers; but to show his love to them, and confirm their faith in him, he came himself, and gave them all the assurances they could desire of the truth of it, that they might not have it by hearsay only, and at second hand, but might themselves be eye-witnesses of his being alive, because they must attest it to the world, and build the church upon that testimony. Now observe here,

I. When and where this appearance was, *v.* 19. It was *the same day* that he rose, *being the first day of the week*, the day after the Jewish sabbath, at a private meeting of the disciples, ten of them, and some more of their friends with them, Luke xxiv. 33.

There are three secondary ordinances (as I may call them) instituted by our Lord Jesus, to continue in his church, for the support of it, and for the due administration of the principal ordinances—the word, sacraments, and prayer; these are, the Lord's day, solemn assemblies, and a standing ministry. The mind of Christ concerning each of these is plainly intimated to us in these verses: of the first two, here, in the circumstances of this appearance, the other *v.* 21. Christ's kingdom was to be set up among men, immediately upon his resurrection; and accordingly we find the very day he arose, though but a day of small things, yet graced with those solemnities which should help to keep up a face of religion throughout all the ages of the church.

1. Here is a Christian sabbath observed by the disciples, and owned by our Lord Jesus. The visit Christ made to his disciples was on *the first day of the week.* And the first day of the week is (I think) the only day of the week, or month, or year, that is ever mentioned by number in all the New Testament; and this is several times spoken of as a day religiously observed. Though it was said here expressly (*v.* 1) that Christ arose on *the first day of the week*, and it might have been sufficient to say here (*v.* 19), he appeared the same day at evening; yet, to put an honour upon the day, it is repeated, *being the first day of the week;* not that the apostles designed to put honour upon the day (they were yet in doubt concerning the occasion of it), but God designed to put honour upon it, by ordering it that they should be altogether, to receive Christ's first visit on that day. Thus, in effect, he blessed and sanctified that day, because in it the Redeemer rested.

2. Here is a Christian assembly solemnized by the disciples, and also owned by the Lord Jesus. Probably the disciples met here for some religious exercise, to pray together; or, perhaps, they met to compare notes, and consider whether they had sufficient evidence of their Master's resurrection, and to consult what was now to be done, whether they should keep together or scatter; they met to know one another's minds, strengthen one another's hands, and concert proper measures to be taken in the present critical juncture. This meeting was private, because they durst not appear publicly, especially in a body. They met in a house, but they kept the door shut, that they might not be seen together, and that none might come among them but such as they knew; for they feared the Jews, who would prosecute the disciples as criminals, that they might seem to believe the lie they would deceive the world with, that his

disciples came by night, and stole him away. Note, (1.) The disciples of Christ, even in difficult times, must not *forsake the assembling of themselves together*, Heb. x. 25. Those *sheep of the flock were scattered* in the storm; but sheep are sociable, and will come together again. It is no new thing for the assemblies of Christ's disciples to be driven into corners, and forced into the wilderness, Rev. xii. 14; Prov. xxviii. 12. (2.) God's people have been often obliged to *enter into their chambers, and shut their doors,* as here, *for fear of the Jews.* Persecution is allotted them, and retirement from persecution is allowed them; and then where shall we look for them but in *dens and caves of the earth.* It is a real grief, but no real reproach, ot Christ's disciples, thus to abscond.

II. What was said and done in this visit Christ made to his disciples, and his interview between them. When they were assembled, Jesus came among them, in his own likeness, yet drawing a veil over the brightness of his body, now begun to be glorified, else it would have dazzled their eyes, as in this transfiguration. Christ came among them, to give them a specimen of the performance of his promise, that, *where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them.* He came, though *the doors were shut.* This does not at all weaken the evidence of his having a real human body after his resurrection; though the doors were shut, he knew how to open them without any noise, and come in so that they might not hear him, as formerly he had walked on the water, and yet had a true body. It is a comfort to Christ's disciples, when their solemn assemblies are reduced to privacy, that no doors can shut out Christ's presence from them. We have five things in this appearance of Christ:—

(1.) His kind and familiar salutation of his disciples: *He said, Peace be unto you.* This was not a word of course, though commonly used so at the meeting of friends, but a solemn, uncommon benediction, conferring upon them all the blessed fruits and effects of his death and resurrection. The phrase was common, but the sense was now peculiar. *Peace be unto you* is as much as, All good be to you, all peace always by all means. Christ had left them his peace for their legacy, *ch.* xiv. 27. By the death of the testator the testament was become of force, and he was now risen from the dead, to prove the will, and to be himself the executor of it. Accordingly, he here makes prompt payment of the legacy: *Peace be unto you.* His speaking peace makes peace, *creates the fruit of the lips, peace;* peace with God, peace in your own consciences, peace with one another; all this peace be with you; not peace with the world, but peace in Christ. His sudden appearing in *the midst of them,* when they were full of doubts concerning him, full of fears concerning themselves, could not but put them into some disorder and consternation, the noise of which waves he stills with this word, *Peace be unto you.*

(2.) His clear and undeniable manifestation of himself to them, *v.* 20. And here observe,

[1.] The method he took to convince them of the truth of his resurrection, They now saw him alive whom multitudes had seen dead two or three days before. Now the only doubt was whether this that they saw alive was the same individual body that had been seen dead; and none could desire a further proof that it was so than the scars or marks of the wounds in the body. Now, *First,* The marks of the wounds, and very deep marks (though without any pain or soreness), remained in the body of the Lord Jesus even after his resurrection, that they might be demonstrations of the truth of it. Conquerors glory in the marks of their wounds. Christ's wounds were to speak on earth that it was he himself, and therefore he arose with them; they were to speak in heaven, in the intercession he must ever live to make, and therefore he ascended with them, and appeared in the midst of *the throne, a Lamb as it had been slain, and bleeding afresh,* Rev. v. 6. Nay, it should seem, he will come again with his scars, that *they may look on him whom they pierced. Secondly,* These marks he showed to his disciples, for their conviction. They had not only the satisfaction of seeing him look with the same countenance, and hearing him speak with the same voice they had been so long accustomed to, *Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora, ferebat—Such were his gestures, such his eyes and hands!* but they had the further evidence of these peculiar marks: he opened his hands to them, that they might see the marks of the wounds on them; he opened his breast, as the nurse hers to the child, to show them the wound there. Note, The exalted Redeemer will ever show himself open-handed and open-hearted to all his faithful friends and followers. When Christ manifests his love to believers by the comforts of his Spirit, assures them that *because he lives they shall live also,* then *he shows them his hands and his side.*

[2.] The impression it made upon them, and the good it did them. *First,* They were convinced that they saw the Lord; so was their faith confirmed. At first, they thought they saw an apparition only, a phantasm; but now they knew it was the Lord himself. Thus many true believers, who, while they were weak, feared their comforts were but imaginary, afterwards find them, through grace, real and substantial. They ask not, Is it the Lord? but are assured, it is he. *Secondly, Then they were glad;* that which strengthened their faith raised their joy; *believing they rejoice.* The evangelist seems to write it with somewhat of transport and triumph. *Then! then! were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.* If it *revived*

the spirit of Jacob to hear that *Joseph was yet alive,* how would it revive the heart of these disciples to hear that Jesus is again alive? It is life from the dead to them. Now that word of Christ was fulfilled (*ch.* xvi. 22), *I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.* This wiped away all tears from their eyes. Note, A sight of Christ will gladden the heart of a disciple at any time; the more we see of Christ, the more we shall rejoice in him; and our joy will never be perfect till we come *where we shall see him as he is.*

(3.) The honourable and ample commission he gave them to be his agents in the planting of his church, *v.* 21. Here is,

[1.] The preface to their commission, which was the solemn repetition of the salutation before: *Peace be unto you.* This was intended, either, *First,* To raise their attention to the commission he was about to give them. The former salutation was to still the tumult of their fear, that they might calmly attend to the proofs of his resurrection; this was to reduce the transport of their joy, that they might sedately hear what he had further to say to them; or, *Secondly,* To encourage them to accept of the commission he was giving them. Though it would involve them in a great deal of trouble, yet he designed their honour and comfort in it, and, in the issue, it would be peace to them. Gideon received his commission with this word, *Peace be unto thee,* Judg. vi. 22, 23. Christ is our Peace; if he is with us, peace is to us. Christ was now sending the disciples to publish peace to the world (Isa. lii. 7), and he here not only confers it upon them for their own satisfaction, but commits it to them as a trust to be by them transmitted to all the sons of peace, Luke x. 5, 6.

[2.] The commission itself, which sounds very great: *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

First, It is easy to understand how Christ sent them; he appointed them to go on with his work upon earth, and to lay out themselves for the spreading of his gospel, and the setting up of his kingdom, among men. He sent them authorized with a divine warrant, armed with a divine power,—sent them as ambassadors to treat of peace, and as heralds to proclaim it,—sent them as servants to bid to the marriage. Hence they were called *apostles—men sent.*

Secondly, But how Christ sent them as the Father sent him is not so easily understood; certainly their commissions and powers were infinitely inferior to his; but, 1. Their work was of the same kind with his, and they were to go on where he left off. They were not sent to be priests and kings, like him, but only prophets. As he was sent to bear witness to the truth, so were they; not to be mediators of the reconciliation, but only preachers and publishers of it. Was he sent, *not to be ministered to, but to minister? not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him? not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fill them up?* So were they. As the Father sent him *to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,* so he sent them into all the world. 2. He had a power to send them equal to that which the Father had to send him. Here the force of the comparison seems to lie. By the same authority that the Father sent me do I send you. This proves the Godhead of Christ; the commissions he gave were of equal authority with those which the Father gave, and as valid and effectual to all intents and purposes, equal with those he gave to the Old-Testament prophets in visions. The commissions of Peter and John, by the plain word of Christ, are as good as those of Isaiah and Ezekiel, by *the Lord sitting on his throne;* nay, equal with that which was given to the Mediator himself for his work. Had he an incontestable authority, and an irresistible ability, for his work? so had they for theirs. Or thus, *As the Father hath sent me* is, as it were, the recital of his power; by virtue of the authority given him as a Mediator, he gave authority to them, as his ministers, to act for him, and in his name, with the children of men; so that those who received them, or rejected them, received or rejected him, and him that sent him, ch. xiii. 20.

(4.) The qualifying of them for the discharge of the trust reposed in them by their commission (*v.* 22): *He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.* Observe,

[1.] The sign he used to assure them of, and affect them with, the gift he was now about to bestow upon them: *He breathed on them;* not only to show them, by this breath of life, that he himself was really alive, but to signify to them the spiritual life and power which they should receive from him for all the services that lay before them. Probably he breathed upon them all together, not upon each severally; and, though Thomas was not with them, yet the Spirit of the Lord knew where to find him, as he did Eldad and Medad, Num. xi. 26. Christ here seems to refer to the creation of man at first, by the breathing of the breath of life into him (Gen. ii. 7), and to intimate that he himself was the author of that work, and that the spiritual life and strength of ministers and Christians are derived from him, and depend upon him, as much as the natural life of Adam and his seed. As *the breath of the Almighty* gave life to man and began the old world, so the breath of the mighty Saviour gave life to his ministers, and began a new world, Job xxxiii. 4. Now this intimates to us, *First,* That the Spirit is the breath of Christ, *proceeding from the Son.* The Spirit, in the Old Testament, is compared to breath (Ezek. xxxvii. 9), *Come, O breath;* but the New Testament tells us it is Christ's breath. *The breath of God* is put for the power of his wrath (Isa. xi. 4; xxx. 33); but the breath of Christ

signifies the power of his grace; the breathing of threatenings is changed into the breathings of love by the mediation of Christ. Our words are uttered by our breath, so the word of Christ *is spirit and life.* The word comes from the Spirit, and the Spirit comes along with the word. *Secondly,* That the Spirit is the gift of Christ. The apostles communicated the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, those hands being first lifted up in prayer, for they could only beg this blessing, and carry it as messengers; but Christ conferred the Holy Ghost by breathing, for he is the author of the gift, and from him it comes originally. Moses could not give his Spirit, God did it (Num. xi. 17); but Christ did it himself.

[2.] The solemn grant he made, signified by this sign, "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost,* in part now, as an earnest of what you shall further receive *not many days hence.*" They now received more of the Holy Ghost than they had yet received. Thus spiritual blessings are given gradually; to him that has shall be given. Now that Jesus began to be glorified more of the Spirit began to be given: see *ch.* vii. 39. Let us see what is contained in this grant. *First,* Christ hereby gives them assurance of the Spirit's aid in their future work, in the execution of the commission now given them: "*I send you,* and you shall have the Spirit to go along with you." Now the *Spirit of the Lord rested upon them,* to qualify them for all the services that lay before them. Whom Christ employs he will clothe with his Spirit, and furnish with all needful powers. *Secondly,* He hereby gives them experience of the Spirit's influences in their present case. He had shown them his hands and his side, to convince them of the truth of his resurrection; but the plainest evidences will not of themselves work faith, witness the infidelity of the soldiers, who were the only eye-witnesses of the resurrection. "Therefore *receive ye the Holy Ghost,* to work faith in you, and to open your understandings." They were now in danger of the Jews: "Therefore receive ye the Holy Ghost, to work courage in you." What Christ said to them he says to all true believers, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost,* Eph. i. 13. What Christ gives we must receive, must submit ourselves and our whole souls to the quickening, sanctifying, influences of the blessed Spirit—receive his motions, and comply with them—receive his powers and make use of them: and those who thus obey this word as a precept shall have the benefit of it as a promise; they shall receive the Holy Ghost as the guide of their way and the earnest of their inheritance.

(5.) One particular branch of the power given them by their commission particularized (*v.* 23): "*Whosesoever sins you remit,* in the due execution of the powers you are entrusted with, they are remitted to them, and they may take the comfort of it; *and whosesoever sins you retain,* that is, pronounce unpardoned and the guilt of them bound on, *they are retained,* and the sinner may be sure of it, to his sorrow." Now this follows upon their receiving the Holy Ghost; for, if they had not had an extraordinary spirit of discerning, they had not been fit to be entrusted with such an authority; for, in the strictest sense, this is a special commission to the apostles themselves and the first preachers of the gospel, who could distinguish who were in the *gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity,* and who were not. By virtue of this power, Peter struck Ananias and Sapphira dead, and Paul struck Elymas blind. Yet it must be understood as a general charter to the church and her ministers, not securing an infallibility of judgment to any man or company of men in the world, but encouraging the faithful stewards of the mysteries of God to stand to the gospel they were sent to preach, for that God himself will stand to it. The apostles, in preaching remission, must begin at Jerusalem, though she had lately brought upon herself the guilt of Christ's blood: "Yet you may declare their sins remitted upon gospel terms." And Peter did so, Acts ii. 38; iii. 19. Christ, being risen for our justification, sends his gospel heralds to proclaim the jubilee begun, the act of indemnity now passed; and by this rule men shall be judged, *ch.* xii. 48; Rom. ii. 16; Jam. ii. 12. God will never alter this rule of judgment, nor vary from it; those whom the gospel acquits shall be acquitted, and those whom the gospel condemns shall be condemned, which puts immense honour upon the ministry, and should put immense courage into ministers. Two ways the apostles and ministers of Christ remit and retain sin, and both as having authority:—[1.] By sound doctrine. They are commissioned to tell the world that salvation is to be had upon gospel terms, and no other, and they shall find God will say *Amen* to it; so shall their doom be. [2.] By a strict discipline, applying the general rule of the gospel to particular persons. "Whom you admit into communion with you, according to the rules of the gospel, God will admit into communion with himself; and whom you cast out of communion as impenitent, and obstinate in scandalous and infectious sins, shall be bound over to the righteous judgment of God."

III. The incredulity of Thomas, when the report of this was made to him, which introduced Christ's second appearance.

1. Here is Thomas's absence from this meeting, *v.* 24. He is said to be *one of the twelve,* one of the college of the apostles, who, though now eleven, had been twelve, and were to be so again. They were but eleven, and one of them was missing: Christ's disciples will never be all together till the general assembly at the great day. Perhaps it was Thomas's unhappiness that he was absent—either he was not well, or had not no-

tice; or perhaps it was his sin and folly—either he was diverted by business or company, which he preferred before this opportunity, or he durst not come for *fear of the Jews;* and he called that his prudence and caution which was his cowardice. However, by his absence he missed the satisfaction of seeing his Master risen, and of sharing with the disciples in their joy upon that occasion. Note, Those know not what they lose who carelessly absent themselves from the stated solemn assemblies of Christians.

2. The account which the other disciples gave him of the visit their Master had made them, *v.* 25. The next time they saw him they *said unto him,* with joy enough, *We have seen the Lord;* and no doubt they related to him all that had passed, particularly the satisfaction he had given them by showing them his hands and his side. It seems, though Thomas was then from them, he was not long from them; absentees for a time must not be condemned as apostates for ever: Thomas is not Judas. Observe with what exultation and triumph they speak it: "*We have seen the Lord,* the most comfortable sight we ever saw." This they said to Thomas, (1.) To upbraid him with his absence: "*We have seen the Lord,* but thou hast not." Or rather, (2.) To inform him: "*We have seen the Lord,* and we wish thou hadst been here, to see him too, for thou wouldest have seen enough to satisfy thee." Note, The disciples of Christ should endeavour to *build up one another in their most holy faith,* both by repeating what they have heard to those that were absent, that they may hear it at second hand, and also by communicating what they have experienced. Those that by faith have seen the Lord, and tasted that he is gracious, should tell others what God has done for their souls; only let boasting be excluded.

3. The objections Thomas raised against the evidence, to justify himself in his unwillingness to admit it. "Tell me not that you have seen the Lord alive; you are too credulous; somebody has made fools of you. For my part, *except I shall* not only *see in his hands the print of the nails,* but put my finger into it, *and thrust my hand* into the wound *in his side,* I am resolved *I will not believe.*" Some, by comparing this with what he said (*ch.* xi. 16; xiv. 5), conjecture him to have been a man of a rough, morose temper, apt to speak peevishly; for all good people are not alike happy in their temper. However, there was certainly much amiss in his conduct at this time. (1.) He had either not heeded, or not duly regarded, what Christ had so often said, and that too according to the Old Testament, that he would *rise again the third day;* so that he ought to have said, *He is risen,* though he had not seen him, nor spoken with any that had. (2.) He did not pay a just deference to the testimony of his fellow-disciples, who were men of wisdom and integrity, and ought to have been credited. He knew them to be honest men; they all ten of them concurred in the testimony with great assurance; and yet he could not persuade himself to say that *their record was true.* Christ had chosen them to be his witnesses of this very thing to all nations; and yet Thomas, one of their own fraternity, would not allow them to be competent witnesses, nor trust them further than he could see them. It was not, however, their veracity that he questioned, but their prudence; he feared they were too credulous. (3.) He tempted Christ, and *limited the Holy One of Israel,* when he would be convinced by his own method, or not at all. He could not be sure that the print of the nails, which the apostles told him they had seen, would admit the putting of his finger into it, or the wound in his side the thrusting in of his hand; nor was it fit to deal so roughly with a living body; yet Thomas ties up his faith to this evidence. Either he will be humoured, and have his fancy gratified, or he will not believe; see Matt. xvi. 1; xxvii. 42. (4.) The open avowal of this in the presence of the disciples was an offence and discouragement to them. It was not only a sin, but a scandal. As one coward makes many, so does one unbeliever, one sceptic, *making his brethren's heart to faint like his heart,* Deut. xx. 8. Had he only thought this evil, and then laid his hand upon his mouth, to suppress it, his error had remained with himself; but his proclaiming his infidelity, and that so peremptorily, might be of ill consequence to the rest, who were as yet but weak and wavering.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed. 30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

We have here an account of another ap-

pearance of Christ to his disciples, after his resurrection, when Thomas was now with them. And concerning this we may observe,

I. When it was that Christ repeated his visit to his disciples: *After eight days*, that day seven-night after he rose, which must therefore be, as that was, *the first day of the week.*

1. He deferred his next appearance for some time, to show his disciples that he was not risen to such a life as he had formerly lived, to converse constantly with them, but was as one that belonged to another world, and visited this only as angels do, now and then, when there was occasion. Where Christ was during these eight days, and the rest of the time of his abode on earth, it is folly to enquire, and presumption to determine. Wherever he was, no doubt *angels ministered unto him.* In the beginning of his ministry he had been forty days unseen, tempted by the evil spirit, Matt. iv. 1, 2. And now in the beginning of his glory he was forty days, for the most part unseen, attended by good spirits.

2. He deferred it so long as seven days. And why so? (1.) That he might put a rebuke upon Thomas for his incredulity. He had neglected the former meeting of the disciples; and, to teach him to prize those seasons of grace better for the future, he cannot have such another opportunity for several days. He that slips one tide must stay a good while for another. A very melancholy week, we have reason to think Thomas had of it, drooping, and in suspense, while the other disciples were full of joy; and it was owing to himself and his own folly. (2.) That he might try the faith and patience of the rest of the disciples. They had gained a great point when they were satisfied that they had seen the Lord. *Then were the disciples glad;* but he would try whether they could keep the ground they had got, when they saw no more of him for some days. And thus he would gradually wean them from his bodily presence, which they had doted and depended too much upon. (3.) That he might put an honour upon the first day of the week, and give a plain intimation of his will, that it should be observed in his church as the Christian sabbath, the weekly day of holy rest and holy convocations. That one day in seven should be religiously observed was an appointment from the beginning, as old as innocency; and that in the kingdom of the Messiah the first day of the week should be that solemn day this was indication enough, that Christ on that day once and again met his disciples in a religious assembly. It is highly probable that in his former appearance to them he appointed them that day seven-night to be together again, and promised to meet them; and also that he appeared to them every first day of the week, besides other times, during the forty days. The religious observance of that day has been thence transmitted down to us through every age of the church. This therefore is *the day which the Lord has made.*

II. Where, and how, Christ made them this visit. It was at Jerusalem, for the doors were shut now, as before, for fear of the Jews. There they staid, to keep the feast of unleavened bread seven days, which expired the day before this; yet they would not set out on their journey to Galilee on the first day of the week, because it was the Christian sabbath, but staid till the day after. Now observe, 1. That Thomas was with them; though he had withdrawn himself once, yet not a second time. When we have lost one opportunity, we should give the more earnest heed to lay hold on the next, that we may recover our losses. It is a good sign if such a loss whet our desires, and a bad sign if it cool them. The disciples admitted him among them, and did not insist upon his believing the resurrection of Christ, as they did, because as yet it was but darkly revealed; they did not receive him to doubtful disputation, but bade him welcome to come and see. But observe, Christ did not appear to Thomas, for his satisfaction, till he found him in society with the rest of his disciples, because he would countenance the meetings of Christians and ministers, for there will he be *in the midst of them.* And, besides, he would have all the disciples witnesses of the rebuke he gave to Thomas, and yet withal of the tender care he had of him. 2. That Christ *came* in among them, and *stood in the midst,* and they all knew him, for he showed himself now, just as he had shown himself before (*v.* 19), still the same, and no changeling. See the condescension of our Lord Jesus. The gates of heaven were ready to be opened to him, and there he might have been in the midst of the adorations of a world of angels; yet, for the benefit of his church, he lingered on earth, and visited the little private meetings of his poor disciples, and is in the midst of them. 3. He saluted them all in a friendly manner, as he had done before; he said, *Peace be unto you.* This was no vain repetition, but significant of the abundant and assured peace which Christ gives, and of the continuance of his blessings upon his people, for they *fail not,* but are *new every morning,* new every meeting.

III. What passed between Christ and Thomas at this meeting; and that only is recorded, though we may suppose he said a great deal to the rest of them. Here is,

1. Christ's gracious condescension to Thomas, *v.* 27. He singled him out from the rest, and applied himself particularly to him: "*Reach hither thy finger,* and, since thou wilt have it so, *behold my hands,* and satisfy thy curiosity to the utmost about the *print of the nails; reach hither thy hand,* and, if nothing less will convince thee, *thrust it into my side.*" Here we have, (1.) An implicit

rebuke of Thomas's incredulity, in the plain reference which is here had to what Thomas had said, answering it word for word, for he had heard it, though unseen; and one would think that his telling him of it should put him to the blush. Note, There is not an unbelieving word on our tongues, no, nor thought in our minds, at any time, but it is known to the Lord Jesus, Ps. lxxviii. 21. (2.) An express condescension to his weakness, which appears in two things:—[1.] That he suffers his wisdom to be prescribed to. Great spirits will not be dictated to by their inferiors, especially in their acts of grace; yet Christ is pleased here to accommodate himself even to Thomas's fancy in a needless thing, rather than break with him, and leave him in his unbelief. He will not *break the bruised reed*, but, as a good shepherd, *gathers that which was driven away*, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. We ought thus to *bear the infirmities of the weak*, Rom. xv. 1, 2. [2.] He suffers his wounds to be raked into, allows Thomas even to thrust his hand into his side, if then at last he would believe. Thus, for the confirmation of our faith, he has instituted an ordinance on purpose to keep his death in remembrance, though it was an ignominious, shameful death, and one would think should rather have been forgotten, and no more said of it; yet, because it was such an evidence of his love as would be an encouragement to our faith, he appoints the memorial of it to be celebrated. And in that ordinance wherein we *show the Lord's death* we are called, as it were, to put our finger *into the print of the nails. Reach hither thy hand* to him, who reacheth forth his helping, inviting, giving hand to thee.

It is an affecting word with which Christ closes up what he had to say to Thomas: *Be not faithless but believing; μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος—do not thou become an unbeliever;* as if he would have been sealed up under unbelief, had he not yielded now. This warning is given to us all: *Be not faithless;* for, if we are faithless, we are Christless and graceless, hopeless and joyless; let us therefore say, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.*

2. Thomas's believing consent to Jesus Christ. He is now ashamed of his incredulity, and cries out, *My Lord and my God, v.* 28. We are not told whether he did put his finger into the print of the nails; it should seem, he did not, for Christ says (*v.* 29), *Thou hast seen, and believed;* seeing sufficed. And now faith comes off a conqueror, after a struggle with unbelief.

(1.) Thomas is now fully satisfied of the truth of Christ's resurrection—that the same Jesus that was crucified is now alive, and this is he. His slowness and backwardness to believe may help to strengthen our faith; for hereby it appears that the witnesses of Christ's resurrection, who attested it to the world, and pawned their lives upon it, were not easy credulous men, but cautious enough, and suspended their belief of it till they saw the utmost evidence of it they could desire. Thus *out of the eater came forth meat.*

(2.) He therefore believed him to be Lord and God, and we are to believe him so. [1.] We must believe his deity—that he is God; not a man made God, but God made man, as this evangelist had laid down his thesis at first, *ch.* i. 1. The author and head of our holy religion has the wisdom, power, sovereignty, and unchangeableness of God, which was necessary, because he was to be not only the founder of it, but the foundation of it for its constant support, and the fountain of life for its supply. [2.] His mediation—that he is Lord, the one Lord, 1 Cor. viii. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5. He is sufficiently authorized, as plenipotentiary, to settle the great concerns that lie between God and man, to take up the controversy which would inevitably have been our ruin, and to establish the correspondence that was necessary to our happiness; see Acts ii. 36; Rom. xiv. 9.

(3.) He consented to him as his Lord and his God. In faith there must be the consent of the will to gospel terms, as well as the assent of the understanding to gospel truths. We must accept of Christ to be that to us which the Father hath appointed him. *My Lord* refers to *Adonai*—my foundation and stay; *my God* to *Elohim*—my prince and judge. God having constituted him the umpire and referee, we must approve the choice, and entirely refer ourselves to him. This is the vital act of faith, He is mine, Cant. ii. 16.

(4.) He made an open profession of this, before those that had been the witnesses of his unbelieving doubts. He says it to Christ, and, to complete the sense, we must read it, *Thou art* my Lord and my God; or, speaking to his brethren, *This is* my Lord and my God. Do we accept of Christ as our *Lord God?* We must go to him, and tell him so, as David (Ps. xvi. 2), deliver the surrender to him as *our act and deed*, tell others so, as those that triumph in our relation to Christ: *This is my beloved.* Thomas speaks with an ardency of affection, as one that took hold of Christ with all his might, *My Lord* and *my God.*

3. The judgment of Christ upon the whole (*v.* 29): "*Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed,* and it is well thou art brought to it at last upon any terms; but *blessed are those that have not seen, and yet have believed.*" Here,

(1.) Christ owns Thomas a believer. Sound and sincere believers, though they be slow and weak, shall be graciously accepted of the Lord Jesus. Those who have long stood it out, if at last they yield, shall find him ready to forgive. No sooner did Thomas consent to Christ than Christ gives him the comfort of it, and lets him know that he believes.

(2.) He upbraids him with his former incredulity. He might well be ashamed to

think, [1.] That he had been so backward to believe, and came so slowly to his own comforts. Those that in sincerity have closed with Christ see a great deal of reason to lament that they did not do it sooner. [2.] That it was not without much ado that he was brought to believe at last: "If thou hadst not seen me alive, thou wouldst not have believed; but if no evidence must be admitted but that of our own senses, and we must believe nothing but what we ourselves are eye-witnesses of, farewell all commerce and conversation. If this must be the only method of proof, how must the world be converted to the faith of Christ? He is therefore justly blamed for laying so much stress upon this.

(3.) He commends the faith of those who believe upon easier terms. Thomas, as a believer, was truly blessed; but rather *blessed are those that have not seen.* It is not meant of not seeing the objects of faith (for these are invisible, Heb. xi. 1; 2 Cor. iv. 18), but the motives of faith—Christ's miracles, and especially his resurrection; blessed are those that see not these, and yet believe in Christ. This may look, either backward, upon the Old-Testament saints, who had not seen the things which they saw, and yet believed the promise made unto the fathers, and lived by that faith; or forward, upon those who should afterwards believe, the Gentiles, who had never seen Christ in the flesh, as the Jews had. This faith is more laudable and praise-worthy than theirs who saw and believed; for, [1.] It evidences a better temper of mind in those that do believe. Not to see and yet to believe argues greater industry in searching after truth, and greater ingenuousness of mind in embracing it. He that believes upon that sight has his resistance conquered by a sort of violence; but he that believes without it, like the Bereans, is more noble. [2.] It is a greater instance of the power of divine grace. The less sensible the evidence is the more does the work of faith appear to be the Lord's doing. Peter is blessed in his faith, because flesh and blood have not revealed it to him, Matt. xvi. 17. Flesh and blood contribute more to their faith that see and believe, than to theirs who see not and yet believe. Dr. Lightfoot quotes a saying of one of the rabbin, "That one proselyte is more acceptable to God than all the thousands of Israel that stood before mount Sinai; for they saw and received the law, but a proselyte sees not, and yet receives it."

IV. The remark which the evangelist makes upon his narrative, like an historian drawing towards a conclusion, *v.* 30, 31. And here,

1. He assures us that many other things occurred, which were all worthy to be recorded, but are *not written in the book: many signs.* Some refer this to all the signs that Jesus did during his whole life, all the wondrous words he spoke, and all the wondrous works he did. But it seems rather to be confined to the signs he did after his resurrection, for these were in the presence of the disciples only, who are here spoken of, Acts x. 41. Divers of his appearances are not recorded, as appears, 1 Cor. xv. 5—7. See Acts i. 3. Now, (1.) We may here improve this general attestation, that there were other signs, many others, for the confirmation of our faith; and, being added to the particular narratives, they very much strengthen the evidence. Those that recorded the resurrection of Christ were not put to fish for evidence, to take up such short and scanty proofs as they could find, and make up the rest with conjecture. No, they had evidence enough and to spare, and more witnesses to produce than they had occasion for. The disciples, in whose presence these other signs were done, were to be preachers of Christ's resurrection to others, and therefore it was requisite they should have proofs of it *ex abundanti—in abundance,* that they might have a strong consolation, who ventured life and all upon it. (2.) We need not ask why they were not all written, or why not more than these, or others than these; for it is enough for us that so it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration this was given. Had this history been a mere human composition, it had been swelled with a multitude of depositions and affidavits, to prove the contested truth of Christ's resurrection, and long arguments drawn up for the demonstration of it; but, being a divine history, the penmen write with a noble security, relating what amounted to a competent proof, sufficient to convince those that were willing to be taught and to condemn those that were obstinate in their unbelief; and, if this satisfy not, more would not. Men produce all they have to say, that they may gain credit; but God does not, for he can give faith. Had this history been written for the entertainment of the curious, it would have been more copious, for every circumstance would have brightened and embellished the story; but it was written to bring men to believe, and enough is said to answer that intention, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear.

2. He instructs us in the design of recording what we do find here (*v.* 31): "These accounts are given in this and the following chapter, *that you might believe* upon these evidences; that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, declared with power to be so by his resurrection."

(1.) Here is the design of those that wrote the gospel. Some write books for their diversion, and publish them for their profit or applause, others to oblige the Athenian humour, others to instruct the world in arts and sciences for their secular advantage; but the evangelists wrote without any view of temporal benefit to themselves or others, but to

bring men to Christ and heaven, and, in order to this, to persuade men to believe; and for this they took the most fitting methods, they brought to the world a divine revelation, supported with its due evidences.

(2.) The duty of those that read and hear the gospel. It is their duty to believe, to embrace, the doctrine of Christ, and that record given concerning him, 1 John v. 11. [1.] We are here told what the great gospel truth is which we are to believe—that *Jesus is that Christ*, that *Son of God*. *First*, That he is the Christ, the person who, under the title of the Messiah, was promised to, and expected by, the Old-Testament saints, and who, according to the signification of the name, is *anointed* of God to be a prince and a Saviour. *Secondly*, That he is the Son of God; not only as Mediator (for then he had not been greater than Moses, who was a prophet, intercessor, and lawgiver), but antecedent to his being the Mediator; for if he had not been a divine person, endued with the power of God and entitled to the glory of God, he had not been qualified for the undertaking—not fit either to do the Redeemer's work or to wear the Redeemer's crown. [2.] What the great gospel blessedness is which we are to hope for—*That believing we shall have life through his name*. This is, *First*, To direct our faith; it must have an eye to the life, the crown of life, the tree of life set before us. Life through Christ's name, the life proposed in the covenant which is made with us in Christ, is what we must propose to ourselves as the fulness of our joy and the abundant recompence of all our services and sufferings. *Secondly*, To encourage our faith, and invite us to believe. Upon the prospect of some great advantage, men will venture far; and greater advantage there cannot be than that which is offered by the *words of this life*, as the gospel is called, Acts v. 20. It includes both spiritual life, in conformity to God and communion with him, and eternal life, in the vision and fruition of him. Both are through Christ's name, by his merit and power, and both indefeasibly sure to all true believers.

CHAP. XXI.

The evangelist seemed to have concluded his history with the foregoing chapter; but (as St. Paul sometimes in his epistles), new matter occurring, he begins again. He had said that there were many other signs which Jesus did for the proof of his resurrection. And in this chapter he mentions one of these many, which was Christ's appearance to some of his disciples at the sea of Tiberias, in which we have an account, I. How he discovered himself to them as they were fishing, filled their net, and then very familiarly came and dined with them upon what they had caught, ver. 1—14. II. What discourse he had with Peter after dinner, 1. Concerning himself, ver. 15—19. 2. Concerning John, ver. 20—23. III. The solemn conclusion of this gospel, ver. 24, 25. It is strange that any should suppose that this chapter was added by some other hand, when it is expressly said (ver. 24) that the disciple whom Jesus loved is he which testifieth of these things.

AFTER these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he *himself*, 2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. 6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. 7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him* (for he was naked), and did cast himself into the sea. 8 And the other disciples came in a little ship (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits); dragging the net with fishes. 9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. 10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. 11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. 12 Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. 14 This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

We have here an account of Christ's appearance to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias, Now, 1. Let us compare this appearance with those that *went before*. In those Christ showed himself to his disciples when they were met in a solemn assembly (it should seem, for religious worship) upon a Lord's day, and when they were all together, perhaps expecting his appearing; but in this

he showed himself to some of them occasionally, upon a week-day, when they were fishing, and little thought of it. Christ has many ways of making himself known to his people; usually in his ordinances, but sometimes by his Spirit he visits them when they are employed in common business, as the *shepherds* who were *keeping their flocks by night* (Luke ii. 8), even so *here also*, Gen. xvi. 13. 2. Let us compare it with that which followed at the mountain in Galilee, where Christ had appointed them to meet him, Matt. xxviii. 16. Thitherward they moved as soon as the days of unleavened bread were over, and disposed of themselves as they thought fit, till the time fixed for this interview, or general rendezvous. Now this appearance was while they were waiting for that, that they might not be weary of waiting. Christ is often better than his word, but never worse, often anticipates and outdoes the believing expectations of his people, but never disappoints them. As to the particulars of the story, we may observe,

I. Who they were to whom Christ now showed himself (*v.* 2): not to all the twelve, but to seven of them only. Nathanael is mentioned as one of them, whom we have not met with since *ch.* i. But some think he was the same with Bartholomew, one of the twelve. The two not named are supposed to be Philip of Bethsaida and Andrew of Capernaum. Observe here, 1. It is good for the disciples of Christ to be much together; not only in solemn religious assemblies, but in common conversation, and about common business. Good Christians should by this means both testify and increase their affection to, and delight in, each other, and edify one another both by discourse and example. 2. Christ chose to manifest himself to them when they were together; not only to countenance Christian society, but that they might be joint witnesses of the same matter of fact, and so might corroborate one another's testimony. Here were seven together to attest this, on which some observe that the Roman law required seven witnesses to a testament. 3. Thomas was one of them, and is named next to Peter, as if he now kept closer to the meetings of the apostles than ever. It is well if losses by our neglects make us more careful afterwards not to let opportunities slip.

II. How they were employed, *v.* 3. Observe,

1. Their agreement to go a fishing. They knew not well what to do with themselves. For my part, says Peter, *I will go a fishing: We will go with thee* then, say they, for we will keep together. Though commonly two of a trade cannot agree, yet they could. Some think they did amiss in returning to their boats and nets, which they had left; but then Christ would not have countenanced them in it with a visit. It was rather commendable in them; for they did it, (1.) To redeem time, and not be idle. They were not yet appointed to preach the resurrection of Christ. Their commission was in the drawing, but not perfected. The hour for entering upon action was not come. It is probable that their Master had directed them to say nothing of his resurrection till after his ascension, nay, not till after the pouring out of the Spirit, and then they were to begin at Jerusalem. Now, in the mean time, rather than do nothing, they would go a fishing; not for recreation, but for business. It is an instance of their humility. Though they were advanced to be sent of Christ, as he was of the Father, yet they did not take state upon them, but remembered *the rock out of which they were hewn.* It is an instance likewise of their industry, and bespeaks them good husbands of their time. While they were waiting, they would not be idling. Those who would give an account of their time with joy should contrive to fill up the vacancies of it, to gather up the fragments of it. (2.) That they might help to maintain themselves and not be burdensome to any. While their Master was with them, those who ministered to him were kind to them; but now that the *bridegroom was taken from them* they must *fast* in those days, and therefore their own hands, as Paul's, must *minister to their necessities;* and for this reason Christ asked them, *Have you any meat?* This teaches us with quietness *to work and eat our own bread.*

2. Their disappointment in their fishing. That night they caught nothing, though, it is probable, they *toiled all night*, as Luke v. 5. See the vanity of this world; the hand of the diligent often returns empty. Even good men may come short of desired success in their honest undertakings. We may be in the way of our duty, and yet not prosper. Providence so ordered it that all that night they should catch nothing, that the miraculous draught of fishes in the morning might be the more wonderful and the more acceptable. In those disappointments which to us are very grievous God has often designs that are very gracious. Man has indeed *a dominion over the fish of the sea*, but they are not always at his beck; God only knows the *paths of the sea*, and commands that which passeth through them.

III. After what manner Christ made himself known to them. It is said (*v.* 1), *He showed himself.* His body, though a true and real body, was raised, as ours will be, a spiritual body, and so was visible only when he himself was pleased to make it so; or, rather, came and removed so quickly that it was here or there in an instant, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.* Four things are observable in the appearance of Christ to them:—

1. He showed himself to them seasonably (*v.* 4): *When the morning was now come*, after a fruitless night's toil, Jesus *stood on the shore.* Christ's time of making himself

known to his people is when they are most at a loss. When they think they have lost themselves, he will let them know that they have not lost him. Weeping may *endure for a night; but joy comes*, if Christ comes, *in the morning*. Christ appeared to them, not *walking upon the water*, because, being *risen from the dead*, he was not to be with them as he had been; but *standing upon the shore*, because now they were to make towards him. Some of the ancients put this significancy upon it, that Christ, having finished his work, was got through a stormy sea, a sea of blood, to a safe and quiet shore, where he stood in triumph; but the disciples, having their work before them, were yet at sea, in toil and peril. It is a comfort to us, when our passage is rough and stormy, that our Master is at shore, and we are hastening to him.

2. He showed himself to them gradually. The disciples, though they had been intimately acquainted with him, *knew not*, all at once, *that it was Jesus*. Little expecting to see him there, and not looking intently upon him, they took him for some common person waiting the arrival of their boat, to buy their fish. Note, Christ is often nearer to us than we think he is, and so we shall find afterwards, to our comfort.

3. He showed himself to them by an instance of his pity, *v.* 5. He called to them, *Children*, παιδία—"*Lads, have you any meat?* Have you caught any fish?" Here, (1.) The compellation is very familiar; he speaks unto them as unto his sons, with the care and tenderness of a father: *Children*. Though he had now entered upon his exalted state, he spoke to his disciples with as much kindness and affection as ever. They were not children in age, but they were his children, the children which God had given him. (2.) The question is very kind: *Have you any meat?* He asks as a tender father concerning his children whether they be provided with that which is fit for them, that, if they be not, he may take care for their supply. Note, *The Lord is for the body*, 1 Cor. vi. 13. Christ takes cognizance of the temporal wants of his people, and has promised them not only grace sufficient, but food convenient. *Verily they shall be fed*, Ps. xxxvii. 3. Christ looks into the cottages of the poor, and asks, *Children, have you any meat?* thereby inviting them to open their case before him, and by the prayer of faith to *make their requests known* to him: and then let them *be careful for nothing*; for Christ takes care of them, takes care for them. Christ has herein set us an example of compassionate concern for our brethren. There are many poor householders disabled for labour, or disappointed in it, that are reduced to straits, whom the rich should enquire after thus, *Have you any meat?* For the most necessitous are commonly the least clamorous. To this question the disciples gave a short answer, and, some think, with an air of discontent and peevishness. They said, *No*; not giving him any such friendly and respectful title as he had given them. So short do the best come in their returns of love to the Lord Jesus. Christ put the question to them, not because he did not know their wants, but because he would know them *from them*. Those that would have supplies from Christ must own themselves empty and needy.

4. He showed himself to them by an instance of his power; and this perfected the discovery (*v.* 6): he ordered them to *cast the net on the right side of the ship*, the contrary side to what they had been casting it on; and then they, who were going home empty-handed, were enriched with a great draught of fishes. Here we have, (1.) The orders Christ gave them, and the promise annexed to those orders: *Cast the net* there in such a place, and *you shall find*. He from whom nothing is hid, no, not the *inhabitants under the waters* (Job xxvi. 5), knew on what side of the ship the shoal of fishes was, and to that side he directs them. Note, Divine providence extends itself to things most minute and contingent; and they are happy that know how to take hints thence in the conduct of their affairs, and acknowledge it in all their ways. (2.) Their obedience of these orders, and the good success of it. As yet *they knew not that it was Jesus*; however, they were willing to be advised by any body, and did not bid this supposed stranger mind his own business and not meddle with theirs, but took his counsel; in being thus observant of strangers, they were obedient to their Master unawares. And it sped wonderfully well; now they had a draught that paid them for all their pains. Note, Those that are humble, diligent, and patient (though their labours may be crossed) shall be crowned; they sometimes live to see their affairs take a hapy turn, after many struggles and fruitless attempts. There is nothing lost by observing Christ's orders. Those are likely to speed well that follow the rule of the word, the guidance of the Spirit, and the intimations of Providence; for this is *casting the net on the right side of the ship*. Now the draught of fishes may be considered, [1.] As a miracle in itself: and so it was designed to prove that Jesus Christ was *raised in power*, though *sown in weakness*, and that all things were *put under his feet, the fishes of the sea* not excepted. Christ manifests himself to his people by doiug that for them which none else can do, and things which *they looked not for*. [2.] As a mercy to them; for the seasonable and abundant supply of their necessities. When their ingenuity and industry failed them, the power of Christ came in opportunely for their relief; for he would take care that those who had left all for him should not want any good thing. When we are most at a loss, *Jehovah-jireh*. [3.] As the memorial of a former

mercy, with which Christ had formerly recompensed Peter for the loan of his boat, Luke v. 4, &c. This miracle nearly resembled that, and could not but put Peter in mind of it, which helped him to improve this; for both that and this affected him much, as meeting him in his own element, in his own employment. Latter favours are designed to bring to mind former favours, that eaten bread may not be forgotten. [4.] As a mystery, and very significant of that work to which Christ was now with an enlarged commission sending them forth. The prophets had been fishing for souls, and caught nothing, or very little; but the apostles, who let down the net at Christ's word, had wonderful success. *Many were the children of the desolate,* Gal. iv. 27. They themselves, in pursuance of their former mission, when they were first made *fishers of men,* had had small success in comparison with what they should now have. When, soon after this, three thousand were converted in one day, then the net was *cast on the right side of the ship.* It is an encouragement to Christ's ministers to continue their diligence in their work. One happy draught, at length, may be sufficient to repay many years of toil at the gospel net.

IV. How the disciples received this discovery which Christ made of himself, *v.* 7, 8, where we find,

1. That John was the most intelligent and quick-sighted disciple. He whom Jesus loved was the first that said, *It is the Lord;* for those whom Christ loves he will in a special manner manifest himself to: his secret is with his favourites. John had adhered more closely to his Master in his sufferings than any of them: and therefore he has a clearer eye and a more discerning judgment than any of them, in recompence for his constancy. When John was himself aware that it was the Lord, he communicated his knowledge to those with him; for this *dispensation of the Spirit is given to every one to profit withal.* Those that know Christ themselves should endeavour to bring others acquainted with him; we need not engross him, there is enough in him for us all. John tells Peter particularly his thoughts, that it was the Lord, knowing he would be glad to see him above any of them. Though Peter had denied his Master, yet, having repented, and being taken into the communion of the disciples again, they were as free and familiar with him as ever.

2. That Peter was the most zealous and warm-hearted disciple; for as soon as he heard it was the Lord (for which he took John's word) the ship could not hold him, nor could he stay till the bringing of it to shore, but into the sea he throws himself presently, that he might come first to Christ. (1.) He showed his respect to Christ by *girding his fisher's coat* about him, that he might appear before his Master in the best clothes he had, and not rudely rush into his presence, stripped as he was to his waistcoat and drawers, because the work he was about was toilsome, and he was resolved to take pains in it. Perhaps the fisher's coat was made of leather, or oil-cloth, and would keep out wet; and he girt it to him that he might make the best of his way through the water to Christ, as he used to do after his nets. when he was intent upon his fishing. (2), He showed the strength of his affection to Christ, and his earnest desire to be with him, by casting himself into the sea; and either wading or swimming to shore, to come to him. When he walked upon the water to Christ (Matt. xiv. 28, 29), it was said, *He came down out of the ship* deliberately; but here it is said, *He cast himself into the sea* with precipitation; sink or swim, he would show his good-will and aim to be with Jesus. "If Christ suffer me," thinks he, "to drown, and come short of him, it is but what I deserve for denying him." Peter had had much forgiven, and made it appear he loved much by his willingness to run hazards, and undergo hardships, to come to him. Those that have been with Jesus will be willing to swim through a stormy sea, a sea of blood, to come to him. And it is a laudable contention amongst Christ's disciples to strive who shall be first with him.

3. That the rest of the disciples were careful and honest hearted. Though they were not in such a transport of zeal as to throw themselves into the sea, like Peter, yet they hastened in the boat to the shore, and made the best of their way (*v.* 8): *The other disciples,* and John with them, who had first discovered that it was Christ, came slowly, yet they came to Christ. Now here we may observe, (1.) How variously God dispenses his gifts. Some excel, as Peter and John; are very eminent in gifts and graces, and are thereby distinguished from their brethren; others are but ordinary disciples, that mind their duty, and are faithful to him, but do nothing to make themselves remarkable; and yet both the one and the other, the eminent and the obscure, shall sit down together with Christ in glory; nay, and perhaps *the last shall be first.* Of those that do excel, some, like John, are eminently contemplative, have great gifts of knowledge, and serve the church with them; others, like Peter, are eminently active and courageous, are strong, and do exploits, and are thus very serviceable to their generation. Some are useful as the church's eyes, others as the church's hands, and all for the good of the body. (2.) What a great deal of difference there may be between some good people and others in the way of their honouring Christ, and yet both *accepted of him.* Some serve Christ more in acts of devotion, and extraordinary expressions of a religious zeal; and they do well, *to the Lord they do it.* Peter ought not to be censured for casting himself

into the sea, but commended for his zeal and the strength of his affection; and so must those be who, in love to Christ, quit the world, with Mary, to *sit at his feet.* But others serve Christ more in the affairs of the world. They continue in that ship, drag the net, and bring the fish to shore, as the other disciples here; and such ought not to be censured as worldly, for they, in their place, are as truly serving Christ as the other, even in serving tables. If all the disciples had done as Peter did, what had become of their fish and their nets? And yet if Peter had done as they did we had wanted this instance of holy zeal. Christ was well pleased with both, and so must we be. (3.) That there are several ways of bringing Christ's disciples to shore to him from off the sea of this world. Some are brought to him by a violent death, as the martyrs, who threw themselves into the sea, in their zeal for Christ; others are brought to him by a natural death, dragging the net, which is less terrible; but both meet at length on the safe and quiet shore with Christ.

V. What entertainment the Lord Jesus gave them when they came ashore.

1. He had provision ready for them. When they came to land, wet and cold, weary and hungry, they found a good fire there to warm them and dry them, and fish and bread, competent provision for a good meal. (1.) We need not be curious in enquiring whence this fire, and fish, and bread, came, any more than whence the meat came which the ravens brought to Elijah. He that could multiply the loaves and fishes that were could make new ones if he pleased, or turn stones into bread, or send his angels to fetch it, where he knew it was to be had. It is uncertain whether this provision was made ready in the open air, or in some fisher's cabin or hut upon the shore; but here was nothing stately or delicate. We should be content with mean things, for Christ was. (2.) We may be comforted in this instance of Christ's care of his disciples; he has wherewith to supply all our wants, and *knows what things we have need of.* He kindly provided for those fishermen, when they came weary from their work; for *verily those shall be fed who trust in the Lord and do good.* It is encouraging to Christ's ministers, whom he hath made fishers of men, that they may depend upon him who employs them to provide for them; and if they should miss of encouragement in this world, should be reduced as Paul was to *hunger, and thirst,* and *fastings often,* let them content themselves with what they have here; they have better things in reserve, and shall *eat and drink with Christ at his table in his kingdom,* Luke xxii. 30. Awhile ago, *the disciples* had entertained Christ with a *broiled fish* (Luke xxiv. 42), and now, as a friend, he returned their kindness, and entertained them with one; nay, in the draught of fishes, he repaid them more than a hundred fold.

2. He called for some of that which they had caught, and they produced it, *v.* 10, 11. Observe here,

(1.) The command Christ gave them to bring their draught of fish to shore: "Bring of the fish hither, which you have now caught, and let us have some of them;" not as if he needed it, and could not make up a dinner for them without it; but, [1.] He would have them eat the labour of their hands, Ps. cxxviii. 2. What is got by God's blessing on our own industry and honest labour, if withal *God give us power to eat of it, and enjoy good in our labour,* hath a peculiar sweetness in it. It is said of the slothful man that *he roasteth not that which he took in hunting;* he cannot find in his heart to dress what he has been at the pains to take, Prov. xii. 27. But Christ would hereby teach us to use what we have. [2.] He would have them taste the gifts of his miraculous bounty, that they might be witnesses both of his power and of his goodness. The benefits Christ bestows upon us are not to be buried and laid up, but to be used and laid out. [3.] He would give a specimen of the spiritual entertainment he has for all believers, which, in this respect, is most free and familiar—that *he sups with them, and they with him;* their graces are pleasing to him, and his comforts are so to them; what he works in them he accepts from them. [4.] Ministers, who are fishers of men, must bring all they catch to their Master, for on him their success depends.

(2.) Their obedience to this command, *v.* 11. It was said (*v.* 6), *They were not able to draw the net to shore, for the multitude of fishes;* that is, they found it difficult, it was more than they could well do; but he that bade them bring it to shore made it easy. Thus the fishers of men, when they have enclosed souls in the gospel net, cannot bring them to shore, cannot carry on and complete the good work begun, without the continued influence of the divine grace. If he that helped us to catch them, when without his help we should have caught nothing, do not help us to keep them, and draw them to land, by *building them up in their most holy faith,* we shall lose them at last, 1 Cor. iii. 7. Observe, [1.] Who it was that was most active in landing the fishes: it was Peter, who, as in the former instance (*v.* 7), had shown a more zealous affection to his Master's person than any of them, so in this he showed a more ready obedience to his Master's command; but all that are faithful are not alike forward. [2.] The number of the fishes that were caught. They had the curiosity to count them, and perhaps it was in order to the making of a dividend; they were in all a *hundred and fifty and three,* and all *great fishes.* These were many more than they needed for their present supply,

but they might sell them, and the money would serve to bear their charges back to Jerusalem, whither they were shortly to return. [3.] A further instance of Christ's care of them, to increase both the miracle and the mercy: *For all there were so many*, and *great fishes* too, *yet was not the net broken;* so that they lost none of their fish, nor damaged their net. It was said (Luke v. 6), *Their net broke.* Perhaps this was a borrowed net, for they had long since left their own; and, if so, Christ would teach us to take care of what we have borrowed, as much as if it were our own. It was well that their net did not break, for they had not now the leisure they had formerly had to mend their nets. The net of the gospel has enclosed multitudes, three thousand in one day, and yet is not broken; it is still as mighty as ever to bring souls to God.

3. He invited them to dinner. Observing them to keep their distance, and that *they were afraid to ask him, Who art thou?* because they *knew it was their Lord*, he called to them very familiarly, *Come, and dine.*

(1.) See here how free Christ was with his disciples; he treated them as friends; he did not say, Come, and wait, Come, and attend me, but *Come, and dine;* not, Go dine by yourselves, as servants are appointed to do, but *Come, and dine* with me. This kind invitation may be alluded to, to illustrate, [1.] The call Christ gives his disciples into communion with him in grace here. *All things are now ready; Come, and dine.* Christ is a feast; come, dine upon him; his flesh is meat indeed, his blood drink indeed. Christ is a friend; come, dine with him, he will bid you welcome, Cant. v. 1. [2.] The call he will give them into the fruition of him in glory hereafter: *Come, ye blessed of my Father; come, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.* Christ has wherewithal to dine all his friends and followers; there is room and provision enough for them all.

(2.) See how reverent the disciples were before Christ. They were somewhat shy of using the freedom he invited them to, and, by his courting them to their meat, it should seem that they stood pausing. Being *to eat with a ruler*, such a ruler, *they consider diligently what is before them. None of them durst ask him, Who art thou?* Either, [1.] Because they would not be so bold with him. Though perhaps he appeared now in something of a disguise at first, as to the two disciples when *their eyes were holden that they should not know him*, yet they had very good reason to think it was he, and could be no other. Or, [2.] Because they would not so far betray their own folly. When he had given them this instance of his power and goodness, they must be stupid indeed if they questioned whether it was he or no. When God, in his providence, has given us sensible proofs of his care for our bodies, and has given us, in his grace, manifest proofs of his good-will to our souls, and good work upon them, we should be ashamed of our distrusts, and not dare to question that which he has left us no room to question. Groundless doubts must be stifled, and not started.

4. He carved for them, as the master of the feast, *v.* 13. Observing them to be still shy and timorous, *he comes, and takes bread himself*, and *gives them*, some to each of them, *and fish likewise.* No doubt he craved a blessing and gave thanks (as Luke xxiv. 30), but, it being his known and constant practice, it did not need to be mentioned. (1.) The entertainment here was but ordinary; it was only a fish-dinner, and coarsely dressed; here was nothing pompous, nothing curious; plentiful indeed, but plain and homely. Hunger is the best sauce. Christ, though he entered upon his exalted state, *showed himself alive by eating*, not showed himself a prince by feasting. Those that could not content themselves with bread and fish, unless they had sauce and wine, would scarcely have found in their hearts to dine with Christ himself here. (2.) Christ himself began. Though, perhaps, having a glorified body, he needed not to eat, yet he would show that he had a true body, which was capable of eating. The apostles produced this as one proof of his resurrection, that *they had eaten and drank with him*, Acts x. 41. (3.) He gave the meat about to all his guests. He not only provided it for them, and invited them to it, but he himself divided it among them, and put it into their hands. Thus to him we owe the application, as well as the purchase, of the benefits of redemption. He gives us power to eat of them.

The evangelist leaves them at dinner, and makes this remark (*v.* 14): *This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself alive to his disciples*, or the greater part of them. *This is the third day;* so some. On the day he rose he appeared five times; the second day was that day seven-night; and this was the third. Or this was his third appearance to any considerable number of his disciples together; though he had appeared to Mary, to the women, to the two disciples, and to Cephas, yet he had but twice before this appeared to any company of them together. This is taken notice of, [1.] For confirming the truth of his resurrection; the vision was doubled, was trebled, for the thing was certain. Those who believed not the first sign would be brought to believe the voice of the latter signs. [2.] As an instance of Christ's continued kindness to his disciples; once, and again, and a third time, he visited them. It is good to keep account of Christ's gracious visits; for he keeps account of them, and they will be remembered against us if we walk unworthily of them, as they were against Solomon, when he was reminded that the Lord God of Israel had appeared unto him twice. *This is now the third;* have we

made a due improvement of *the first and second?* See 2 Cor. xii. 14. *This is the third,* perhaps it may be the last.

15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not. 19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

We have here Christ's discourse with Peter after dinner, so much of it as relates to himself, in which,

I. He examines his love to him, and gives him a charge concerning his flock, *v.* 15—17. Observe,

1. When Christ entered into this discourse with Peter.—It was after they had dined: they had all eaten, and were filled, and, it is probable, were entertained with such edifying discourse as our Lord Jesus used to make his table-talk. Christ foresaw that what he had to say to Peter would give him some uneasiness, and therefore would not say it till they had dined, because he would not spoil his dinner. Peter was conscious to himself that he had incurred his Master's displeasure, and could expect no other than to be upbraided with his treachery and ingratitude. "Was this thy kindness to thy friend? Did not I tell thee what a coward thou wouldest prove?" Nay, he might justly expect to be struck out of the roll of the disciples, and to be expelled the sacred college. Twice, if not thrice, he had seen his Master since his resurrection, and he said not a word to him of it. We may suppose Peter full of doubts upon what terms he stood with his Master; sometimes hoping the best, because he had received favours from him in common with the rest; yet not without some fears, lest the chiding would come at last that would pay for all. But now, at length, his Master put him out of his pain, said what he had to say to him, and confirmed him in his place as an apostle. He did not tell him of his fault hastily, but deferred it for some time; did not tell him of it unseasonably, to disturb the company at dinner, but *when they had dined* together, in token of reconciliation, then discoursed he with him about it, not as with a criminal, but as with a friend. Peter had reproached himself for it, and therefore Christ did not reproach him for it, nor tell him of it directly, but only by a tacit intimation; and, being satisfied in his sincerity, the offence was not only forgiven, but forgotten; and Christ let him know that he was as dear to him as ever. Herein he has given us an encouraging instance of his tenderness towards penitents, and has taught us, in like manner, to restore such as are fallen with a spirit of meekness.

2. What was the discourse itself. Here was the same question three times asked, the same answer three times returned, and the same reply three times given, with very little variation, and yet no *vain repetition.* The same thing was repeated by our Saviour, in speaking it, the more to affect Peter, and the other disciples that were present; it is repeated by the evangelist, in writing it, the more to affect us, and all that read it.

(1.) Three times Christ asks Peter whether he loves him or no. The first time the question is, *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?* Observe,

[1.] How he calls him: *Simon, son of Jonas.* He speaks to him by name, the more to affect him, as Luke xxii. 31. *Simon, Simon.* He does not call him *Cephas,* nor *Peter,* the name he had given him (for he had lost the credit of his strength and stability, which those names signified), but his original name, *Simon.* Yet he gives him no hard language, does not call him out of his name, though he deserved it; but as he had called him when he pronounced him blessed, *Simon Bar-jona,* Matt. xvi. 17. He calls him *son of Jonas* (or *John* or *Johanan*) to remind him of his extraction, how mean it was, and unworthy the honour to which he was advanced.

[2.] How he catechises him: *Lovest thou me more than these?*

First, Lovest thou me? If we would try whether we are Christ's disciples indeed, this must be the enquiry, Do we love him? But there was a special reason why Christ put it now to Peter. 1. His fall had given occasion to doubt of his love: "Peter, I have cause to suspect thy love; for if thou hadst loved me thou wouldst not have been

ashamed and afraid to own me in my sufferings. How canst thou say thou lovest me, when thy heart was not with me? Note, We must not reckon it an affront to have our sincerity questioned, when we ourselves have done that which makes it questionable; after a shaking fall, we must take heed of settling too soon, lest we settle upon a wrong bottom. The question is affecting; he does not ask, "Dost thou fear me? Dost thou honour me? Dost thou admire me?" but, "Dost thou love me? Give but proof of this, and the affront shall be passed by, and no more said of it." Peter had professed himself a penitent, witness his tears, and his return to the society of the disciples; he was now upon his probation as a penitent; but the question is not, "Simon, how much hast thou wept? how often hast thou fasted, and afflicted thy soul?" but, Dost thou love me? It is this that will make the other expressions of repentance acceptable. The great thing Christ eyes in penitents is their eyeing him in their repentance. *Much is forgiven her*, not because *she wept much*, but because *she loved much*. 2. His function would give occasion for the exercise of his *love*. Before Christ would commit his *sheep* to his care, he asked him, *Lovest thou me?* Christ has such a tender regard to his flock that he will not trust it with any but those that love him, and therefore will love all that are his for his sake. Those that do not truly love Christ will never truly love the souls of men, nor will naturally care for their state as they should; nor will that minister love his work that does not love his Master. Nothing but the love of Christ will constrain ministers to go cheerfully through the difficulties and discouragements they meet with in their work, 2 Cor. v. 13, 14. But this love will make their work easy, and them in good earnest in it.

Secondly, Lovest thou me more than these? πλεῖον τούτων. 1. "*Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these*, more than thou lovest these persons? Dost thou love me more than thou dost James or John, thy intimate friends, or Andrew, thy own brother and companion: Those do not love Christ aright that do not love him better than the best friend they have in the world, and make it to appear whenever they stand in comparison or in competition. Or, "*more than thou lovest these things*, these boats and nets—more than all the pleasure of fishing, which some make a recreation of—more than the gain of fishing, which others make a calling of." Those only love Christ indeed that love him better than all the delights of sense and all the profits of this world. "*Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these* occupations thou art now employed in? If so, leave them, to employ thyself wholly in feeding my flock." So Dr. Whitby. 2. "*Lovest thou me more than these love me*, more than any of the rest of the disciples love me? And then the question is intended to upbraid him with his vain-glorious boast, *Though all men should deny thee, yet will not I.* "Art thou still of the same mind?" Or, to intimate to him that he had now more reason to love him than any of them had, for more had been forgiven to him than to any of them, as much as his sin in denying Christ was greater than theirs in forsaking him. *Tell me therefore which of them will love him most?* Luke vii. 42. Note, We should all study to excel in our love to Christ. It is no breach of the peace to strive which shall love Christ best; nor any breach of good manners to go before others in this love.

Thirdly, The second and third time that Christ put this question, 1. He left out the comparison *more than these*, because Peter, in his answer, modestly left it out, not willing to compare himself with his brethren, much less to prefer himself before them. Though we cannot say, *We* love Christ more than others do, yet we shall be accepted if we can say, We love him indeed. 2. In the last he altered the word, as it is in the original. In the first two enquiries, the original word is Ἀγαπᾶς με—*Dost thou retain a kindness for me?* In answer to which Peter uses another word, more emphatic, Φιλῶ σε—*I love thee dearly*. In putting the question the last time, Christ uses that word: And dost thou indeed love me dearly?

(2.) Three times Peter returns the same answer to Christ: *Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.* Observe, [1.] Peter does not pretend to love Christ more than the rest of the disciples did. He is now ashamed of that rash word of his, *Though all men deny thee, yet will not I;* and he had reason to be ashamed of it. Note, Though we must aim to be better than others, yet we must, *in lowliness of mind, esteem others better than ourselves;* for we know more evil of ourselves than we do of any of our brethren. [2.] Yet he professes again and again that he loves Christ: *Yea, Lord,* surely *I love thee;* I were unworthy to live if I did not." He had a high esteem and value for him, a grateful sense of his kindness, and was entirely devoted to his honour and interest; his desire was towards him, as one he was undone without; and his delight in him, as one he should be unspeakably happy in. This amounts to a profession of repentance for his sin, for it grieves us to have affronted one we love; and to a promise of adherence to him for the future: *Lord, I love thee,* and *will never leave thee.* Christ *prayed that his faith might not fail* (Luke xxii.32), and, because his faith did not fail, his love did not; for faith will work by love. Peter had forfeited his claim of relation to Christ. He was now to be re-admitted, upon his repentance. Christ puts his trial upon this issue: *Dost thou love me?* And Peter joins issue upon it: *Lord, I love thee.* Note, Those who can truly say, through grace, that they love Jesus Christ, may take the comfort of their interest in him, notwith-

standing their daily infirmities. [3.] He appeals to Christ himself for the proof of it: *Thou knowest that I love thee;* and *the third time* yet more emphatically: *Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* He does not vouch his fellow-disciples to witness for him—they might be deceived in him; nor does he think his own word might be taken—the credit of that was destroyed already; but he calls Christ himself to witness, *First,* Peter was sure that Christ knew all things, and particularly that he knew the heart, and was a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of it, ch.* xvi. 30. *Secondly,* Peter was satisfied of this, that Christ, who knew all things, knew the sincerity of his love to him, and would be ready to attest it in his favour. It is a terror to a hypocrite to think that Christ knows all things; for the divine omniscience will be a witness against him. But it is a comfort to a sincere Christian that he has that to appeal to: *My witness is in heaven, my record is on high.* Christ knows us better than we know ourselves. Though we know not our own uprightness, he knows it. [4.] *He was grieved* when Christ asked him the *third time, Lovest thou me? v.* 17. *First,* Because it put him in mind of his threefold denial of Christ, and was plainly designed to do so; *and when he thought thereon he wept.* Every remembrance of past sins, even pardoned sins, renews the sorrow of a true penitent. *Thou shalt be ashamed, when I am pacified towards thee. Secondly,* Because it put him in fear lest his Master foresaw some further miscarriage of his, which would be as great a contradiction to his profession of love to him as the former was. "Surely," thinks Peter, "my Master would not thus put me upon the rack if he did not see some cause for it. What would become of me if I should be again tempted?" Godly sorrow works carefulness and fear, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

(3.) Three times Christ committed the care of his flock to Peter: *Feed my lambs; feed my sheep; feed my sheep.* [1.] Those whom Christ committed to Peter's care were his lambs and his sheep. The church of Christ is his flock, *which he hath purchased with his own blood* (Acts xx. 28), and he is *the chief shepherd* of it. In this flock some are lambs, young and tender and weak, others are sheep, grown to some strength and maturity. The Shepherd here takes care of both, and of the lambs first, for upon all occasions he showed a particular tenderness for them. *He gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom.* Isa. xl. 11. [2.] The charge he gives him concerning them is to feed them. The word used in *v.* 15, 17, is βόσκε, which strictly signifies to *give them food;* but the word used in *v.* 16 is ποίμαινε, which signifies more largely to do all the offices of a shepherd to them: "*Feed the lambs* with that which is proper for them, and *the sheep* likewise with *food convenient. The lost sheep of the house of Israel,* seek and feed them, and *the other sheep* also *which are not of this fold.*" Note, It is the duty of all Christ's ministers to feed his lambs and sheep. *Feed them,* that is, teach them; for the doctrine of the gospel is spiritual food. *Feed them,* that is, "Lead them to the green pastures, presiding in their religious assemblies, and ministering all the ordinances to them. Feed them by personal application to their respective state and case; not only lay meat before them, but feed those with it that are wilful and will not, or weak and cannot feed themselves." *When Christ ascended on high, he gave pastors,* left his flock with those that loved him, and would take care of them for his sake. [3.] But why did he give this charge particularly to Peter? Ask the advocates for the pope's supremacy, and they will tell you that Christ hereby designed to give to Peter, and therefore to his successors, and therefore to the bishops of Rome, an absolute dominion and headship over the whole Christian church; as if a charge to serve the sheep gave a power to lord it over all the shepherds; whereas, it is plain, Peter himself never claimed such a power, nor did the other disciples ever own it in him. This charge given to Peter to preach the gospel is by a strange artifice made to support the usurpation of his pretended successors, that fleece the sheep, and, instead of feeding them, feed upon them. But the particular application to Peter here was designed, *First,* To restore him to his apostleship, now that he repented of his abjuration of it, and to renew his commission, both for his own satisfaction, and for the satisfaction of his brethren. A commission given to one convicted of a crime is supposed to amount to a pardon; no doubt, this commission given to Peter was an evidence that Christ was reconciled to him, else he would never have reposed such a confidence in him. Of some that have deceived us we say, "Though we forgive them, we will never trust them;" but Christ, when he forgave Peter, trusted him with the most valuable treasure he had on earth. *Secondly,* It was designed to quicken him to a diligent discharge of his office as an apostle. Peter was a man of a bold and zealous spirit, always forward to speak and act, and, lest he should be tempted to take upon him the directing of the shepherds, he is charged to feed the sheep, as he himself charges all the presbyters to do, and not *to lord it over God's heritage,* 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. If he will be doing, let him do this, and pretend no further. *Thirdly,* What Christ said to him he said to all his disciples; he charged them all, not only to be fishers of men (though that was said to Peter, Luke v. 10), by the conversion of sinners, but feeders of the flock, by the edification of saints.

II. Christ, having thus appointed Peter his doing work, next appoints him his suffering work. Having confirmed to him the honour of an apostle, he now tells him of

further preferment designed him—the honour of a martyr. Observe,

1. How his martyrdom is foretold (*v.* 18): *Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands*, being compelled to it, and *another shall gird thee* (as a prisoner that is pinioned) *and carry thee whither* naturally *thou wouldest not.*

(1.) He prefaces the notice he gives to Peter of his sufferings with a solemn asseveration, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee.* It was not spoken of as a thing probable, which perhaps might happen, but as a thing certain, *I say it to thee.* "Others, perhaps, will say to thee, as thou didst to me, *This shall not be unto thee;* but I say it shall." As Christ foresaw all his own sufferings, so he foresaw the sufferings of all his followers, and foretold them, though not in particular, as to Peter, yet in general, that they must take up their cross. Having charged him to feed his sheep, he bids him not to expect ease and honour in it, but trouble and persecution, and to suffer ill for doing well.

(2.) He foretels particularly that he should die a violent death, by the hands of an executioner. The stretching out of his hands, some think, points at the manner of his death by crucifying; and the tradition of the ancients, if we may rely upon that, informs us that Peter was crucified at Rome under Nero, A. D. 68, or, as others say, 79. Others think it points at the bonds and imprisonments which those are hampered with that are sentenced to death. The pomp and solemnity of an execution add much to the terror of death, and to an eye of sense make it look doubly formidable. Death, in these horrid shapes, has often been the lot of Christ's faithful ones, who yet have *overcome it by the blood of the Lamb.* This prediction, though pointing chiefly at his death, was to have its accomplishment in his previous sufferings. It began to be fulfilled presently, when he was imprisoned, Acts iv. 3; v. 18; xii. 4. No more is implied here in his being carried whither he would not than that it was a violent death that he should be carried to, such a death as even innocent nature could not think of without dread, nor approach without some reluctance. He that puts on the Christian does not put off the man. Christ himself prayed against the bitter cup. A natural aversion to pain and death is well reconcileable with a holy submission to the will of God in both. Blessed Paul, though longing to be unloaded, owns he cannot desire *to be unclothed,* 2 Cor. v. 4.

(3.) He compares this with his former liberty. "Time was when thou knewest not any of these hardships, *thou girdedsl thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest.*" Where trouble comes we are apt to aggravate it with this, that it has been otherwise; and to fret the more at the grievances of restraint, sickness, and poverty, because we have known the sweets of liberty, health, and plenty, Job xxix. 2; Ps. xlii. 4. But we may turn it the other way, and reason thus with ourselves: "How many years of prosperity have I enjoyed more than I deserved and improved? And, having received good, shall I not receive evil also? See here, [1.] What a change may possibly be made with us, as to our condition in this world! Those that have *girded themselves with strength and honour,* and indulged themselves in the greatest liberties, perhaps levities, may be reduced to such circumstances as are the reverse of all this. See 1 Sam. ii. 5. [2.] What a change is presently made with those that leave all to follow Christ! They must no longer gird themselves, but he must gird them! and must no longer walk whither they will, but whither he will. [3.] What a change will certainly be made with us if we should live to be old! Those who, when they were young, had strength of body and vigour of mind, and could easily go through business and hardship, and take the pleasures they had a mind to, when they shall be old, will find their strength gone, like Samson, when his hair was cut and he could *not shake himself as at other times.*

(4.) Christ tells Peter he should suffer thus in his old age. [1.] Though he should be old, and in the course of nature not likely to live long, yet his enemies would hasten him out of the world violently when he was about to retire out of it peaceably, and would put out his candle when it was almost burned down to the socket. See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17. [2.] God would shelter him from the rage of his enemies till he should come to be old, that he might be made the fitter for sufferings, and the church might the longer enjoy his services.

2. The explication of this prediction (*v* 19), *This spoke he* to Peter, *signifying by what death he should glorify God,* when he had finished his course. Observe, (1.) That it is not only *appointed to all once to die,* but it is appointed to each what death he shall die, whether natural or violent, slow or sudden, easy or painful. When Paul speaks of so *great a death,* he intimates that there are degrees of death; there is one way into the world, but many ways out, and God has determined which way we should go. (2.) That it is the great concern of every good man, whatever death he dies, to glorify God in it; for what is our chief end but this, *to die to the Lord, at the word of the Lord?* When we die patiently, submitting to the will of God, —die cheerfully, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God,—and die usefully, witnessing to the truth and goodness of religion and encouraging others, we glorify God in dying: and this is *the earnest expectation and hope* of all good Christians, as it was Paul's, *that Christ may be magnified in them living and dying,* Phil. i. 20. (3.) That the death of the martyrs was in a special manner for the glorifying of God. The truths of God, which they died in the defence of, are hereby confirmed.

The grace of God, which carried them with so much constancy through their sufferings, is hereby magnified. And the consolations of God, which have abounded towards them in their sufferings, and his promises, the springs of their consolations, have hereby been recommended to the faith and joy of all the saints. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church, and the conversion and establishment of thousands. *Precious* therefore *in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints,* as that which honours him; and those who thereby at such an expense honour him he will honour.

3. The word of command he gives him hereupon: *When he had spoken thus,* observing Peter perhaps to look blank upon it, *he saith unto him, Follow me.* Probably he rose from the place where he had sat at dinner, walked off a little, and bade Peter attend him. This word, *Follow me,* was, (1.) A further confirmation of his restoration to his Master's favour, and to his apostleship; for *Follow me* was the first call. (2.) It was an explication of the prediction of his sufferings, which perhaps Peter at first did not fully understand, till Christ gave him that key to it, *Follow me:* "Expect to be treated as I have been, and to tread the same bloody path that I have trodden before thee; *for the disciple is not greater than his Lord.* (3.) It was to excite him to, and encourage him in, faithfulness and diligence in his work as an apostle. He had told him to *feed his sheep,* and let him set his Master before him as an example of pastoral care: "Do as I have done." Let the under-shepherds study to imitate the Chief Shepherd. They had followed Christ while he was here upon earth, and now that he was leaving them he still preaches the same duty to them, though to be performed in another way, *Follow me;* still they must follow the rules he had given them and the example he had set them. And what greater encouragement could they have than this, both in services and in sufferings? [1.] That herein they did follow him, and it was their present honour; who would be ashamed to follow such a leader? [2.] That hereafter they should follow him, and that would be their future happiness; and so it is a repetition of the promise Christ had given Peter (*ch.* xiii. 36), *Thou shalt follow me afterwards.* Those that faithfully follow Christ in grace shall certainly follow him to glory.

20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do?* 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me. 23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is *that* to thee? 24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. 25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

In these verses we have,

I. The conference Christ had with Peter concerning John, the beloved disciple, in which we have,

1. The eye Peter cast upon him (*v.* 20): Peter, in obedience to his Master's orders, followed him, and *turning about,* pleased with the honours his Master now did him, *he sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following* likewise. Observe here, (1.) How John is described. He does not name himself, as thinking his own name not worthy to be preserved in these records; but gives such a description of himself as sufficiently informs us whom he meant, and withal gives us a reason why he followed Christ so closely. *He was the disciple whom Jesus loved,* for whom he had a particular kindness above the rest; and therefore you cannot blame him for coveting to be as much as possible within hearing of Christ's gracious words during those few precious minutes with which Christ favoured his disciples. It is probable that mention is here made of John's having *leaned on Jesus's breast* and his enquiring concerning the traitor, which he did at the instigation of Peter (*ch.* xiii. 24), as a reason why Peter made the following enquiry concerning him, to repay him for the former kindness. Then John was in the favourite's place, lying in Christ's bosom, and he improved the opportunity to oblige Peter. And now that Peter was in the favourite's place, called to take a walk with Christ, he thought himself bound in gratitude to put such a question for John as he thought would oblige him, we all being desirous to know things to come. Note, As we have interest at the throne of grace, we should improve it for the benefit of one another. Those that help us by their prayers at one time should be helped by us with ours at another time. This is the *communion of saints.* (2.) What he did: He also followed Jesus, which shows how well he loved his company; where he was there also would this servant of his be. When Christ called Peter to follow him, it looked as if he designed to have some private talk with him; but such

an affection John had to his Master that he would rather do a thing that seemed rude than lose the benefit of any of Christ's discourse. What Christ said to Peter he took as said to himself; for that word of command, *Follow me*, was given to all the disciples. At least he desired to have fellowship with those that had fellowship with Christ, and to accompany those that attended him. The bringing of one to follow Christ should engage others. *Draw me and we will run after thee*, Cant. i. 4. (3.) The notice Peter took of it: *He, turning about, seeth him.* This may be looked upon either, [1.] As a culpable diversion from following his Master; he should have been wholly intent upon that, and have waited to hear what Christ had further to say to him, and then was he looking about him to see who followed. Note, The best men find it hard to *attend upon the Lord without distraction*, hard to keep their minds so closely fixed as they should be in following Christ: and a needless and unseasonable regard to our brethren often diverts us from communion with God. Or, [2.] As a laudable concern for his fellow-disciples. He was not so elevated with the honour his Master did him, in singling him out from the rest, as to deny a kind look to one that followed. Acts of love to our brethren must go along with actings of faith in Christ.

2. The enquiry Peter made concerning him (*v.* 21): "*Lord, and what shall this man do?* Thou hast told me my work—to feed the sheep; and my lot—to be *carried whither I would not.* What shall be his work, and his lot?" Now this may be taken as the language, (1.) Of concern for John, and kindness to him: "Lord, thou showest me a great deal of favour. Here comes thy beloved disciple, who never forfeited thy favour, as I have done; he expects to be taken notice of; hast thou nothing to say to him? Wilt thou not tell how he must be employed, and how he must be honoured?" (2.) Or of uneasiness at what Christ had said to him concerning his sufferings: "Lord, must I alone be *carried whither I would not?* Must I be marked out to be run down, and must this man have no share of the cross?" It is hard to reconcile ourselves to distinguishing sufferings, and the troubles in which we think we stand alone. (3.) Or of curiosity, and a fond desire of knowing things to come, concerning others, as well as himself. It seems, by Christ's answer, there was something amiss in the question. When Christ had given him the charge of such a treasure, and the notice of such a trial, it had well become him to have said, "Lord, and what shall I do then to approve myself faithful to such a trust, in such a trial? *Lord, increase my faith.* As my day is, let my strength be." But instead of this, [1.] He seems more concerned for another than for himself. So apt are we to be busy in other men's matters, but negligent in the concerns of our own souls—quick-sighted abroad, but dim-sighted at home—judging others, and prognosticating what they will do, when we have enough to do to *prove our own work*, and *understand our own way.* [2.] He seems more concerned about events than about duty. John was younger than Peter, and, in the course of nature, likely to survive him: "Lord," says he, "what times shall he be reserved for?" Whereas, if God by his grace enable us to persevere to the end, and finish well, and get safely to heaven, we need not ask, "What shall be the lot of those that shall come after us?" Is it not well if peace and truth be in my days? Scripture-predictions must be eyed for the directing of our consciences, not the satisfying of our curiosity.

3. Christ's reply to this enquiry (*v.* 22), "*If I will that he tarry till I come*, and do not suffer as thou must, *what is that to thee.* Mind thou thy own duty, the present duty, *follow thou me.*"

(1.) There seems to be here an intimation of Christ's purpose concerning John, in two things:—[1.] That he should not die a violent death, like Peter, but should tarry till Christ himself came by a natural death to fetch him to himself. The most credible of the ancient historians tell us that John was the only one of all the twelve that did not actually die a martyr. He was often in jeopardy, in bonds and banishments; but at length died in his bed in a good old age. Note, *First*, At death Christ comes to us to call us to account; and it concerns us to be ready for his coming. *Secondly*, Though Christ calls out some of his disciples to resist unto blood, yet not all. Though the crown of martyrdom is bright and glorious, yet the beloved disciple comes short of it. [2.] That he should not die till after Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem: so some understand his tarrying till Christ comes. All the other apostles died before that destruction; but John survived it many years. God wisely so ordered it that one of the apostles should live so long as to close up the canon of the New Testament, which John did solemnly (Rev. xxii. 18), and to obviate the design of the enemy that sowed tares even before the servants fell asleep. John lived to confront Ebion, and Cerinthus, and other heretics, who rose betimes, *speaking perverse things.*

(2.) Others think that it is only a rebuke to Peter's curiosity, and that his tarrying till Christ's second coming is only the supposition of an absurdity: "Wherefore askest thou after that which is foreign and secret? Suppose I should design that John should never die, what does that concern thee? It is nothing to thee, when, or where, or how, John must die. I have told thee how thou must die for thy part; it is enough for thee to know that, *Follow thou me.*" Note, It is the will of Christ that his disciples should mind their own present duty, and not be cu-

rious in their enquiries about future events, concerning either themselves or others. [1.] There are many things we are apt to be solicitous about that are nothing to us. Other people's characters are nothing to us; it is out of our line to judge them, Rom. xiv. 4. Whatsoever they are, saith Paul, it makes no matter to me. Other people's affairs are nothing to us to intermeddle in; we must quietly work, and mind our own business. Many nice and curious questions are put by the *scribes* and *disputers of this world* concerning the counsels of God, and the state of the invisible world, concerning which we may say, *What is this to us?* What do you think will become of such and such? is a common question, which may easily be answered with another: *What is that to me?* To his own Master he stands or falls. What is it to us to *know the times and the seasons?* Secret things belong not to us. [2.] The great thing that is all in all to us is duty, and not event; for duty is ours, events are God's—our own duty, and not another's; for every one shall bear his own burden—our present duty, and not the duty of the time to come; for sufficient to the day shall be the directions thereof: a *good man's steps are ordered by the Lord,* (Ps. xxxvii. 23); he is guided step by step. Now all our duty is summed up in this one of following Christ. We must attend his motions, and accommodate ourselves to them, follow him to do him honour, as the servant his master; we must walk in the way in which he walked, and aim to be where he is. And, if we will closely attend to the duty of following Christ, we shall find neither heart nor time to meddle with that which does not belong to us.

4. The mistake which arose from this saying of Christ, that *that disciple should not die,* but abide with the church to the end of time; together with the suppressing of this motion by a repetition of Christ's words, *v.* 23. Observe here,

(1.) The easy rise of a mistake in the church by misconstruing the sayings of Christ, and turning a supposition to a position. Because John must not die a martyr, they conclude he must not die at all.

[1.] They were inclined to expect it because they could not choose but desire it. *Quod volumus facile credimus—We easily believe what we wish to be true.* For John to abide in the flesh when the rest were gone, and to continue in the world till Christ's second coming, they think, will be a great blessing to the church, which in every age might have recourse to him as an oracle. When they must lose Christ's bodily presence, they hope they shall have that of his beloved disciple; as if that must supply the want of his, forgetting that the blessed Spirit, the Comforter, was to do that. Note, We are apt to dote too much on men and means, instruments and external helps, and to think we are happy if we may but have them always with us; whereas God will change his workmen, and yet carry on his work, that the *excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men.* There is no need of immortal ministers to be the guides of the church, while it is under the conduct of an eternal Spirit.

[2.] Perhaps they were confirmed in their expectations when they now found that John survived all the rest of the apostles. Because he lived long, they were ready to think he should live always; whereas *that which waxeth old is ready to vanish away,* Heb. viii. 13.

[3.] However, it took rise from a saying of Christ's, misunderstood, and then made a saying of the church. Hence learn, *First,* The uncertainty of human tradition, and the folly of building our faith upon it. Here was a tradition, an apostolical tradition, a saying that *went abroad among the brethren.* It was early; it was common; it was public; and yet it was false. How little then are those unwritten traditions to be relied upon which the council of Trent hath decreed to be received with a *veneration and pious affection equal to that which is owing to the holy scripture.* Here was a traditional exposition of scripture. No new saying of Christ's advanced, but only a construction put by the brethren upon what he did really say, and yet it was a misconstruction. Let the scripture be its own interpreter and explain itself, as it is in a great measure its own evidence and proves itself, for it is light. *Secondly,* The aptness of men to misinterpret the sayings of Christ. The grossest errors have sometimes shrouded themselves under the umbrage of incontestable truths; and the scriptures themselves have been wrested by the unlearned and unstable. We must not think it strange if we hear the sayings of Christ misinterpreted, quoted to patronise the errors of antichrist, and the impudent doctrine of transubstantiation—for instance, pretending to build upon that blessed word of Christ, *This is my body.*

(2.) The easy rectifying of such mistakes, by adhering to the word of Christ, and abiding by that. So the evangelist here corrects and controls that saying among the brethren, by repeating the very words of Christ. He did not say that that disciple should not die. Let us not say so then; but he said, *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* He said so, and no more. *Add thou not unto his words.* Let the words of Christ speak for themselves, and let no sense be put upon them but what is genuine and natural; and in that let us agree. Note, The best end of men's controversies would be to keep to the express words of scripture, and speak, as well as think, according to that word, Isa. viii. 20. Scripture language is the safest and most proper vehicle of scripture truth: the *words which the Holy Ghost teacheth,* 1 Cor. ii. 13. As the scripture itself, duly attended to, is the

best weapon wherewith to wound all dangerous errors (and therefore deists, Socinians, papists, and enthusiasts do all they can to derogate from the authority of the scripture), so the scripture itself, humbly subscribed to, is the best weapon-salve to heal the wounds that are made by different modes of expression concerning the same truths. Those that cannot agree in the same logic and metaphysics, and the propriety of the same terms of air, and the application of them, may yet agree in the same scripture terms, and then may agree to love one another.

II. We have here the conclusion of this gospel, and with it of the evangelical story, *v.* 24, 25. This evangelist ends not so abruptly as the other three did, but with a sort of cadency.

1. This gospel concludes with an account of the author or penman of it, connected by a decent transition to that which went before (*v.* 24): *This is the disciple which testifies of these things* to the present age, and wrote these things for the benefit of posterity, even this same that Peter and his Master had that conference about in the foregoing verses—John the apostle. Observe here, (1.) Those who wrote the history of Christ were not ashamed to put their names to it. John here does in effect subscribe his name. As we are sure who was the author of the first five books of the Old Testament, which were the foundation of that revelation, so we are sure who were the penmen of the four gospels and the Acts, the pentateuch of the New Testament. The record of Christ's life and death is not the report of we know not who, but was drawn up by men of known integrity, who were ready not only to depose it upon oath, but, which was more, to *seal it with their blood.* (2.) Those who wrote the history of Christ wrote upon their own knowledge, not by hearsay, but what they themselves were eye and ear witnesses of. The penman of this history was a disciple, a beloved disciple, one that had leaned on Christ's breast, that had himself heard his sermons and conferences, had seen his miracles, and the proofs of his resurrection. This is he who testifies what he was well assured of. (3.) Those who wrote the history of Christ, as they testified what they had seen, so they wrote what they had first testified. It was published by word of mouth, with the greatest assurance, before it was committed to writing. They testified it in the pulpit, testified it at the bar, solemnly averred it, stedfastly avowed it, not as travellers give an account of their travels, to entertain the company, but as witnesses upon oath give account of what they know in a matter of consequence, with the utmost caution and exactness, to found a verdict upon. What they wrote they wrote as an affidavit, which they would abide by. Their writings are standing testimonies to the world of the truth of Christ's doctrine, and will be testimonies either for us or against us according as we do or do not receive it. (4.) It was graciously appointed, for the support and benefit of the church, that the history of Christ should be put into writing, that it might with the greater fulness and certainty spread to every place, and last through every age.

2. It concludes with an attestation of the truth of what had been here related: *We know that his testimony is true.* This may be taken either, (1.) As expressing the common sense of mankind in matters of this nature, which is, that the testimony of one who is an eye-witness, is of unspotted reputation, solemnly deposes what he has seen, and puts it into writing for the greater certainty, is an unexceptionable evidence. *We know,* that is, All the world knows, that the testimony of such a one is valid, and the common faith of mankind requires us to give credit to it, unless we can disprove it; and in other cases verdict and judgment are given upon such testimonies. The truth of the gospel comes confirmed by all the evidence we can rationally desire or expect in a thing of this nature. The matter of fact, that Jesus did preach such doctrines, and work such miracles, and rise from the dead, is proved, beyond contradiction, by such evidence as is always admitted in other cases, and therefore to the satisfaction of all that are impartial; and then let the doctrine recommend itself, and let the miracles prove it to be of God. Or, (2.) As expressing the satisfaction of the churches *at that time* concerning the truth of what is here related. Some take it for the subscription of the church of Ephesus, others of the angels or ministers of the churches of Asia to this narrative. Not as if an inspired writing needed any attestation from men, or could thence receive any addition to its credibility; but hereby they recommended it to the notice of the churches, as an inspired writing, and declared the satisfaction they received by it. Or, (3.) As expressing the evangelist's own assurance of the truth of what he wrote, like that (*ch.* xix. 35), *He knows that he saith true.* He speaks of himself in the plural number, *We know,* not for majesty-sake, but for modesty-sake, as 1 John i. 1, *That which we have seen;* and 2 Pet. i. 16. Note, The evangelists themselves were entirely satisfied of the truth of what they have testified and transmitted to us. They do not require us to believe what they did not believe themselves; no, they knew that their testimony was true, for they ventured both this life and the other upon it; threw away this life, and depended upon another, on the credit of what they spoke and wrote.

3. It concludes with an *et cetera,* with a reference to *many other things,* very memorable, said and done by our Lord Jesus, which were well known by many then living, but not thought fit to be recorded for posterity, *v.* 25. There were many things very remarkable and improvable, which, if they should be written at large, with the several

circumstances of them, even the world itself, that is, all the libraries in it, could not contain the books that might be written. Thus he concludes like an orator, as Paul (Heb. xi. 32), *What shall I more say? For the time would fail me.* If it be asked why the gospels are not larger, why they did not make the New-Testament history as copious and as long as the Old, it may be answered,

(1.) It was not because they had exhausted their subject, and had nothing more to write that was worth writing; no, there were many of Christ's sayings and doings not recorded by any of the evangelists, which yet were worthy to be written in letters of gold. For, [1.] Every thing that Christ said and did was worth our notice, and capable of being improved. He never spoke an idle word, nor did an idle thing; nay, he never spoke nor did any thing mean, or little, or trifling, which is more than can be said of the wisest or best of men. [2.] His miracles were many, very many, of many kinds, and the same often repeated, as occasion offered. Though one true miracle might perhaps suffice to prove a divine commission, yet the repetition of the miracles upon a great variety of persons, in a great variety of cases, and before a great variety of witnesses, helped very much to prove them true miracles. Every new miracle rendered the report of the former the more credible; and the multitude of them renders the whole report incontestable. [3.] The evangelists upon several occasions give general accounts of Christ's preaching and miracles, inclusive of many particulars, as Matt. iv. 23, 24; ix. 35; xi. 1; xiv. 14, 36; xv. 30; xix. 2; and many others. When we speak of Christ, we have a copious subject before us; the reality exceeds the report, and, after all, *the one half is not told us.* St. Paul quotes one of Christ's sayings, which is not recorded by any of the evangelists (Acts xx. 35), and doubtless there were many more. All his sayings were apophthegms.

(2.) But it was for these three reasons:—[1.] Because it was not needful to write more. This is implied here. There were many other things, which were not written because there was no occasion for writing them. What is written is a sufficient revelation of the doctrine of Christ and the proof of it, and the rest was but to the same purport. Those that argue from this against the sufficiency of the scripture as the rule of our faith and practice, and for the necessity of unwritten traditions, ought to show what there is in the traditions they pretend to perfective of the written word; we are sure there is that which is contrary to it, and therefore reject them. By these therefore *let us be admonished, for of making many books there is no end,* Eccl. xii. 12. If we do not believe and improve what is written, neither should we if there had been much more. [2.] It was not possible to write all. It was possible for the Spirit to indite all, but morally impossible for the penmen to pen all. *The world could not contain the books.* It is a hyperbole common enough and justifiable, when no more is intended than this, that it would fill a vast and incredible number of volumes. It would be such a large and overgrown history as never was; such as would jostle out all other writings, and leave us no room for them. What volumes would be filled with Christ's prayers, had we the record of all those he made, when he *continued all night in prayer to God,* without any vain repetitions? Much more if all his sermons and conferences were particularly related, his miracles, his cures, all his labours, all his sufferings; it would have been an endless thing. [3.] It was not advisable to write much; for *the world,* in a moral sense, *could not contain the books that should be written.* Christ said not what he might have said to his disciples, *because they were not able to bear it;* and for the same reason the evangelists wrote not what they might have written. *The world could not contain,* χωρῆσαι. It is the word that is used, *ch.* viii. 37, "My word *has no place* in you." They would have been so many that they would have found no room. All people's time would have been spent in reading, and other duties would thereby have been crowded out. Much is overlooked of what is written, much forgotten, and much made the matter of doubtful disputation; this would have been the case much more if there had been such a world of books of equal authority and necessity as the whole history would have swelled to; especially since it was requisite that what was written should be meditated upon and expounded, which God wisely thought fit to leave room for. Parents and ministers, in giving instruction, must consider the capacities of those they teach, and, like Jacob, must take heed of over-driving. Let us be thankful for the books that are written, and not prize them the less for their plainness and brevity, but diligently improve what God has thought fit to reveal, and long to be above, where our capacities shall be so elevated and enlarged that there will be no danger of their being over-loaded.

The evangelist, concluding with *Amen,* thereby sets to his seal, and let us set to ours, an *Amen* of faith, subscribing to the gospel, that it is true, all true; and an *Amen* of satisfaction in what is written, as able to make us wise to salvation. *Amen;* so be it.

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